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BY- BERRY, JACK AND OTHERS

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THE PAPERS THAT WERE PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE HELD IN APRIL 1966 ARE REPRODUCED, AND AN EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF THE DISCUSSION THAT AROSE FROM THE PAPERS IS INCLUDED. THE PAPERS PRESENTED IN THE THREE SESSIONS WERE--(1) AFRICAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES, (2) AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE AS A DEGREE SUBJECT IN GREAT BRITAIN, (3) AFRICAN FOLKLORE STUDIES AT BERKELEY, (4) TALE, TELLER, AND AUDIENCE IN AFRICAN SPOKEN NARRATIVE, (5) AFRICAN TRADITIONAL NON-PROSE FORMS--RECITING, DECLAIMING, SINGING, AND STROPHIC STRUCTURE, (6) VERNACULAR LITERATURE IN AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHING, (7) CANONS OF CRITICISM FOR NEO-AFRICAN LITERATURE, (8) THE TEACHING OF MODERN AFRICAN LITERATURE WRITTEN IN A WESTERN LANGUAGE, (9) MODERN AFRICAN WRITING IN ENGLISH, AND (10) THE CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPREHENSION OF A NATIONAL LITERATURE--NIGERIA. (AL)

Proceedings of a Conference on African Languages and Literatures held at Northwestern University

April 28-30, 1966

Edited by Jack Berry
Robert Plant Armstrong
John Povey

This volume was prepared under Office of Education Contract No. OE-6-14-018.

Preface

In the following pages, we present the pilot papers of a conference held at Northwestern University, April 28-30, 1966, together with the edited transcripts of the discussions arising out of the papers.

The conference was held under the auspices of the U. S. Office of Education, for whose continuing interest and assistance we would express our appreciation. We would also, on behalf of the conference, wish to express our gratitude to the President and faculty of Elmhurst College for hospitality and our congratulations to Gary Colburn on the successful performance of Wole Soyinka's play, The Lion And The Jewel. Our especial thanks are due to Miss Frances A. Leary, the conference secretary, and to Jennie Keith Hill, Christopher Ehret, and Peter Gingiss for assistance in the preparation of this document.

All the editorial comment in this final copy of the transactions is the responsibility of the undersigned, acting in accordance with the wishes of the last plenary session of the conference.

Jack Berry
Robert P. Armstrong
John Povey

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Introduction

It has not always been easy to incorporate within the traditional structure of American universities the new studies brought about by recent increased interest in the African continent, especially where these studies are essentially cross-disciplinary. African literature in contrast with, say, African geography is a case in point. The widespread and very lively interest in contemporary writing by Africans has led in recent years to a demand for formal instruction in this subject in colleges and universities. A number of American institutions have made attempts to meet this demand in several different ways, but it cannot be said that the subject has yet been fully integrated within the accepted curriculum. The difficulties of the subject are reflected in the ambiguity of its name. Is, for example, "literature" to be held to subsume both oral traditions and all other forms of verbal art, as well as the new writing in English and, say, French? And what is the relationship between oral and written literature forms? Again, is the growing body of writing from Africa to be considered, because of language choice, merely an offshoot of parent literatures or is its Africanness such as to set it apart for purposes of critical study? Rather clearly how these questions are answered largely determines by whom and where the subject will be taught professionally. Is the African content such that it demands anthropological and sociological exegesis? Are the forms so exotic that they are susceptible of analysis only in terms of musicology and linguistic science or are they amenable to traditional literary analysis? Attempts have been made to organize these studies in different ways but no clear answer has so far been provided to the basic problems.

Over the past few years scholars concerned especially with the practical problems of teaching the subject have felt the need to share these problems with others in the field. The conference held at Northwestern in April of 1966 was a direct outcome of this need.

In planning the organization of the conference it was assumed that there would be three main areas of concern. First, it seemed desirable to have some account of the present state of African language and literature studies in the three countries which have been most concerned with them. Second, it was thought that the discussions might most conveniently be organized around the two main topics of traditional oral literature and contemporary writing. The plenary sessions and work groups of the conference followed this pattern. In their papers the authors raise a number of questions of theoretical concern but by and large, in the subsequent discussions of them, attention tended to be focused on practical problems. The papers and the discussions speak for themselves and they require little editorial comment from us. Certain conclusions emerge clearly from the deliberations of the conference. Some of these are reaffirmations of the present inadequacies in both research and teaching in the subject. Others are new and specific suggestions. In the recommendations of the working groups especially, some attempt has been made to define precisely the areas of most urgent need. It is our hope that of the suggestions put forward in the final pages of this volume some at least will be implemented in the not-too-distant future.

Jack Berry
John F. Povey
Robert P. Armstrong

AFRICAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Gwendolen M. Carter

African Studies in the United States have had a long history but only since World War II have they become widespread and intensive. At all stages, however, training in African language has been closely associated with other fields of study with African content. Variations have been largely in the degree of concentration upon African languages and the purpose for which they are to be used. Thus the relationship between language training and academic disciplines has varied according to the particular purpose of the specific program.

The earliest concentration on African Studies in this country was at the Hartford Seminary which introduced courses in African languages in 1911. Their primary purpose was to equip those going out into the mission field with an adequate knowledge of the language of those with whom they would be working. This particular emphasis has been retained at the Hartford Seminary which has not set language training as fully in the framework of social sciences as has been true in most other institutions.

The pioneer role in the study of African societies and culture was taken by Professor Melville J. Herskovits of Northwestern University who combined his own rich research and writing in the 1930's with courses presented at that university. The program of African Studies at Northwestern University, whose establishment is commonly dated at 1948, built on the foundations Professor Herskovitz had already laid and was the first of ten formally organized graduate programs in African Studies in the United States. Under Professor Herskovitz' leadership and with the financial aid first of the Carnegie Corporation and then of the Ford Foundation, the Program at Northwestern University maintained a distinctive position within the country, training many of those who subsequently became leaders in African Studies in other institutions. While much of the most distinguished work in the early years of the Program was done, quite naturally, in the field of anthropology, it has expanded increasingly into the social sciences and history, thereby paralleling the character of the other programs of African Studies that have taken form throughout the United States in the post-war period.

The major impetus to the expansion of African Studies in American higher education stems from two interacting forces operating during and immediately after World War II: the national need for information on so-called non-Western areas and for training in non-Western languages; and the needs of scholarship. The vast and widespread expansion of American International responsibilities during World War II and the continued involvement of the United States in all parts of the world gave a particular urgency to the incorporation of non-Western studies, including language study, in crash programs and in academic curricula. But while the original momentum came from the urgent national need to train persons who would be able to communicate in unusual foreign languages, the scholarly implications of studying non-Western societies were soon grasped. With the stimulus and support of the foundations, particularly the Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and subsequently of various agencies of the Government, the universities have taken the lead in expanding knowledge about the non-Western world, including Africa.

The wartime agencies, such as the Army Specialist Training Program and the Army Civil Affairs Training Service, were wholly pragmatic in the crash programs they introduced for teaching unusual living languages. They stimulated new means of intensive language training and also brought into prominence the science of linguistics.

Already during the war, however, much thinking was being devoted to the scholarly implications of non-Western studies and to ways in which a more academic orientation could be given to them. In the 1940's, the American Council of Learned Socities and the Social Science Research Council stimulated conferences to reflect on, plan, and evaluate alternatives in area studies to the crash programs of the Army. The World Areas Committee, a joint committee of the ACLS and the SSRC which was established in 1945-46, was greatly opposed to developing area studies along the lines of the Army Specialist Training Program, and played a positive and important role in providing guide lines for the development of African Studies. Its efforts, combined with foundation aid and the work of those already in the field of African Studies, like Professor Herskovitz, Professor William O. Brown, first director of the Program of African Studies at Boston University, founded in 1953, and Professor William Hance of Columbia University, were particularly important in directing African Studies into scholarly channels.

Academic concern with African Studies in the United States grew very rapidly. The first general gathering of African area specialists was held in Princeton, New Jersey, from October 12-14, 1953. Three and a half years later, in April, 1957, at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, a conference of 35 Africanists drawn from many disciplines decided after much serious discussion that the time was appropriate to launch a national organization for scholars and others with a serious concern for African Studies. This organization, the African Studies Association, now has 533 Fellows, and 406 Associates, the Fellows being selected on the basis of their scholarly achievements in African Studies and controlling the policy of the organization.

The ASA has concentrated on providing information and coordination not only between American Africanists but also between them and their colleagues in Africa and Europe. Its three-day annual meetings stress interdisciplinary discussions and its committees, through which much of the forward thrust in particular fields is made, include literature (recently established), languages, archeology, and the arts and humanities, as well as library and archives. Its principal publications have been the quarterly African Studies Bulletin (recently enlarged in size and containing bibliographical and documentary information as well as reports on activities and plans), and The African World: A Survey of Social Research, edited by Professor Robert Lystead, which provides a perspective survey of the state of particular disciplines in relation to African Studies and suggests lines for exploration.

Parallel to the rapid increase in the number of those studying and teaching in the African field has gone a steadily increasing number of scholarly works, many of them the result of field work under Ford Foundation Area Training Program (in 1961 renamed the Foreign Area Training Program, supported by the Ford Foundation but administered under the Social Science Research Council) or other sources of support. Particularly in this formative period in African Studies there have also been many outstanding figures who moved into African Studies from the base of some other area of concentration--and this process, fortunately, still continues. The vitality and usefulness of all area studies are dependent on the interaction maintained at all times with new disciplinary interests and techniques, and the infusion of insights drawn from investigations in other parts of the world.

Most American institutions have established special administrative arrangements to promote non-Western, including African Studies. The common device has been to set up an Institute, Program, or Center or Interdisciplinary Committee to foster work in the particular geographic area. These adminstrative organizations are quasi-autonomous and commonly have their own funds but they interact constantly with the departmental structure of the particular institution. Faculty and students concerned with African Studies retain their departmental base and in most cases both graduate and undergraduate degrees are taken in particular disciplines. The University of California at Los Angeles gives an M.A. in African Studies, but other programs, like that at Northwestern University, recognize the completion of a designated amount of work with African content through awarding a Certificate, which is looked on as a supplement to an academic degree and not an alternative.

The semi-autonomous programs of African Studies have been the decisive factors in the United States in promoting work in their area. This is not to underestimate the great importance of the stimulus and financial support provided by the foundations and, increasingly, by the Federal Government. It does recognize, however, the crucial work that had to be done, particularly in the early years of area studies, to convince departments of the need to include area specialization within their disciplinary concentration, to secure the acceptance of new courses, recruit staff, stimulate library acquisitions, retain the support of university administration, organize research projects, and secure equipment for such specialized purposes as language instruction.

African Studies Programs in the United States have varied widely in size, emphasis, extent of coverage of particular disciplines and even areas. Syracuse University has a Program of Eastern African Studies; otherwise most programs are concerned broadly with Africa south of the Sahara. The traditional but increasingly artificial division of the continent into Arab Africa, *Afrique noire*, and sub-tropical Africa is being strengthened unfortunately by the practice of the Office of Education of dividing the two former areas between different programs: Middle East; and Africa South of the Sahara. The University of California at Los Angeles, Columbia University, Duquesne University, Howard University, Indiana University, Michigan State University, Northwestern University and Wisconsin University secure some support as graduate language and Area Centers of the Office of Education and the University of Florida, Ohio University, and Lincoln University, as undergraduate Centers.

A number of these Programs or their universities have contractual responsibilities of varied kinds in Africa, e.g., Michigan State University has assisted in developing the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, and Northwestern University helps to train Sudanese engineering students and to provide the University at Khartoum with engineering and science staff members. In general, African Studies Programs see their primary responsibilities as stimulating and coordinating the academic activities concerned with their area: securing fellowships for American and, sometimes, African students; helping to strengthen faculty resources, and to finance and sometimes stimulate faculty research; and developing mutually advantageous plans with their African and European colleagues.

Graduate concentration on African subject matter preceded undergraduate work of this character in the United States. This was partly because the initial stimulus was provided by needs related to mature persons. Moreover the relatively scarce qualified academic personnel either by choice of by plan worked primarily at the graduate level. In addition, the nature of American undergraduate work was less hospitable to area studies.

The typical American undergraduate curriculum includes a one or two year base of general education through college-level approaches to different disciplines before the two year period of moderate disciplinary specialization. As area courses were introduced gingerly and provisionally--one of the first sophomore level courses on Africa south of the Sahara was begun at Smith College in 1954--they were often looked on as "luxury" or temporary interdisciplinary or disciplinary additions. Increasingly, however, undergraduate area courses, including those on Africa, have been made a regular part of the curriculum. Most undergraduate colleges now provide such courses, sometimes as an introduction to the non-Western world, but increasingly in a way that recognizes the distinctive development and characteristics of so large and varied an area as Africa.

The undergraduate courses that focus on material drawn from particular geographic areas of the developing world have often been an abbreviated or simplified version of graduate courses in the same field of study. Lacking the core and continuity provided for Middle East Studies by Islamic culture, the study of Africa has tended at either level to be undertaken piecemeal. There have also been some imaginative interdisciplinary courses, however, that have helped to develop new insights into the interrelatedness of all aspects of society and its environment, a fact particularly obvious in the less developed countries.

As far as is known, only Wisconsin University offers a B.A. in any aspect of African Studies: in their case in African languages and literature. The strong inclination to leave intensive specialization to graduate school works against such a practice in most fields. It is possible, however, if courses and teaching competence are available and the department is willing, to build a substantial background in African material within a disciplinary or interdisciplinary social science or history program of undergraduate studies and to write a B.A. honors thesis using African data. The end result of such planning might well have similarities to the Honors B.A. in African history at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. In the current American academic context, however, such a result would generally have to be achieved by a combination of determined individual effort and departmental permissiveness. It only rarely fits the customary American undergraduate pattern of training to demarcate such a specialized field for a degree

Beginning in 1964-65, the Office of Education deliberately fostered the development of undergraduate area programs and there are now three such centers concerned with Africa south of the Sahara. The purpose of establishing undergraduate area programs in different institutions from those having graduate programs seems to be to spread interest, training and competence in handling non-Western, including African data. More liaison and fruitful interchanges might well be encouraged, however, between graduate and undergraduate programs of African studies.

Clearly the learning of African languages can advantageously be begun at undergraduate and even school levels. The insistence of the Peace Corps that its volunteers have some competence in speaking a local African language before they are sent to the field has underlined both the need and the possibility. For potential Corpsmen, intensive language study is mated in their training to a broad introduction to the area and/or country to which they will be sent. This training plus the two years of experience abroad provides an admirable base for graduate work, if it is combined with demonstrated academic ability. It has also encouraged undergraduates to consider securing competence in an African language (a common choice is Swahili).

The particular concern of social scientists and social psychologists with data from non-Western societies and institutions dates in the United States from the 1950's and correlates with the rise of behavioral studies. Thus the development of new conceptual tools was mated to the recognition that generalizations should be based on as broad a body of comparable data as possible.

Nonetheless, there has been a not surprisingly uneven movement by different disciplines into the African field. Anthropologists and geographers were the earliest to come. It is noticeable, however, that in both fields there are now scholars who have adopted new conceptual and statistical tools that give their current research in Africa and their teaching a different emphasis and character than existed before.

The progress towards independence by African countries and the use they have made of their control of their own policies have provided rich resources of comparative data for political scientists who entered the African field in numbers from the mid-1950's on. Historians have been late comers to the field of African history, largely because of the paucity of written records. Economists have tended to concern themselves chiefly with development economics seen broadly and not restricted to particular geographic areas. Some are now beginning to concentrate on particular areas, however, including Africa or some part of it. The humanities, originally perhaps less culture-bound than other disciplines, have long been concerned with the philosophies, religions, languages and arts of other societies, particularly those in Asia and the Arab world, but relatively less and later those in Africa

For these different disciplines, the language needs have been different. Anthropologists have always needed to learn the language of the particular group with which they were working. But Africa, with its multiplicity of local languages, offered a somewhat dismaying prospect to other disciplines. As long as the colonial systems persisted, English and French and, for their special areas, Portuguese and Afrikaans seemed adequate. With independence, however, the need has become increasingly apparent--it always existed--to be able to collect and evaluate social, political, historical, and even economic data through communicating in local languages or, at least, being able to check the work of interpretors.

Public support under the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, and its extensions, has provided funds through the Office of Education for increased instruction in a wide range of unusual or critical languages (as well as in area courses) to programs that become Language and Area Centers (of which there are now eleven on Africa south of the Sahara). In addition, generous

National Defense Foreign Language (NDFL) fellowships (100 in 1966-67 for work on African languages) are awarded to graduate students in conjunction with other area studies. This new recognition of the importance of competence in African languages has pushed ahead vastly the number of those teaching and studying them.

While language training and linguistics must not be confused, the general trend seems to have been to have the two combined in a single department and handled by much the same personnel. In addition to linguistics own distinctive value as a discipline, it is an important tool in historical and social science research.

Late and still rare among accepted means of acquiring essential insights into African societies and development has been the study of literature and the other humanities. African art, a basic feature of African culture, is intimately interrelated with traditional ceremonies and beliefs. Its impact on Western art has been great and well recognized and its own modern forms are now receiving careful study. The study of African music has also been closely related to anthropology but is now being analyzed in terms of its own particular characteristics, its significance for comparative study and its impact on western music. African literature, particularly in English, is becoming increasingly well-known but seems to be evaluated chiefly in relation to influences from outside rather than as an art form of its own, and as a means of securing insight into the communities from which it emanates.

African literature, in fact, fails to fit, more than do other branches of African humanities, into the ordinary disciplinary structure of an American college or university. African literature in English may seem to belong in the English department, and African literature in French within the French department, but what about African literature in the vernacular? And why should these three be separated from each other and from the societies from which they come? Only Wisconsin University seems to have coped with this particular question by establishing a Department of African Languages and Literature. This approach may not be entirely satisfactory to those who wish to pursue comparative studies of all writing in a particular language, (e.g., English or French) but it recognizes African literature as an entity regardless of the language in which the writer is communicating.

Area studies have introduced and/or stimulated research and teaching in new and rich fields, and thereby added greatly to the body of material available for comparative work. Moreover, by concentrating attention on the essential interrelatedness of all aspects of society and its environment they have acted as a forcing house for interdisciplinary work. Thus area studies have played a distinctive role in breaking down the barriers between disciplines and in bringing social scientists, historians, linguists and those in the humanities with a particular interest in a geographic area into continuous contact with each other. In this way, without in any way impairing--though often over-bridging--the disciplinary and departmental focus of the traditional organization of American universities, area studies have taught specialists much about the approaches and techniques of other disciplines than their own, and thereby stimulated systematic comparative studies, not only between developing societies themselves, but also between developing and developed societies.

Discussion

__Carter__: I am grateful to Mr. Lyndon Harries who drew my attention to an error in the first draft of my paper which was circulated to you all. The University of Wisconsin does have an undergraduate major in African Language and Literature. The University of Ohio, the University of Florida, and Lincoln University, are other institutions with undergraduate programs in African Studies. There are also many small schools which participate in coordinate programs.

__Snyder__: Schools without programs may teach individual courses with African content; for example, modern literature courses which include sections on the African novel. Lewis and Clark University, Howard University, and American University can be cited as examples. Courses with African content may, in fact, contain the seeds for development of future African Studies programs.

__Povey__: What about employment opportunities for students with an M.A. in African studies?

__Armstrong__: With the growth of programs in secondary schools, as for example in the state of Indiana, holders of the M.A. in African studies may teach at the secondary school level.

__Snyder__: At the University of Wisconsin, students may earn a certificate representing their participation in the Program of African Studies, but they receive their degrees in specific disciplines.

__Messinger__: The University of Indiana's Department of Anthropology is the first to have a course in Anthropology and the Humanities included in its core program.

AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE AS A DEGREE SUBJECT IN GREAT BRITAIN

Malcolm Guthrie

In order to provide a framework within which to discuss how the study of African languages and literatures has come to figure in degree syllabuses in London, it is necessary to discuss in the first place some of the characteristics of the British university system in respect to degrees in Arts. To speak of a British "system" in no sense implies that there is any uniformity among the various universities, and in fact there is considerable diversity both as to the types of course provided and as to the way in which the students' achievements are assessed. Nevertheless, in spite of the differences, there is a substantial area of agreement as to the meaning of a "good Arts degree," so that it proves possible to set out the main characteristics that such a degree should have.

Among the various universities in the United Kingdom, London occupies a special place in certain respects, if only because of its "external" examination system by which people who are unable to attend university courses can sit for many of the examinations set for undergraduates and can obtain identical degrees. This has meant in practice that the award of a degree is normally based on performance in a single final examination that may consist of as many as ten three-hour papers, which puts a considerable strain on most students. Apart from this however the London degree system is probably as representative of those in the United Kingdom as a whole as any could be. In any case as there is no other British university where African languages figure in degree syllabuses as subjects in their own right, i.e., not simply as a practical "tool" to be acquired by a student of another subject, the topic of this paper could be dealt with only within the framework of London degrees.

In the first place it is necessary to describe some aspects of the general background to the question as it appears to those who work within the London system. Only after this has been done will it be possible to show what was involved in the introduction of African languages into the system. From the somewhat detailed discussion of this general background it will become apparent that even where some circumstances favour such an introduction, there may be other factors that militate against it.

1. General Background to the Question

There are several aspects to be considered under this heading, not all of which are necessarily peculiar to the United Kingdom, although the total situation thus built up is not likely to obtain elsewhere. It is for this reason that this somewhat extended scene-setting section is called for. There are in fact three main questions which are posed by this situation: (a) what governs the intake of students to a university? (b) what is considered to be the purpose for which Arts courses exist? and (c) what kind of future is open to those who hold an Arts degree?

(a) Entrance to the University

Although in London there have always been numbers of older people reading for a degree, the vast majority of the students come straight from school, and in consequence, as in most other universities, questions of university entrance are closely related to school curricula. It may be a truism that universities cannot plan courses unless they know that schools are able to produce students qualified to follow the courses. Nevertheless, in view of the differences in the school system in various countries, it is essential to bear in mind the close relationship between general educational policy and what is practicable at university level.

What is probably peculiar to the British system is the way government financial support is not directly tied to the control of policy in respect either to the universities or to the whole of the school system. As far as the universities are concerned, the level of government subsidy is very high, and in fact no university in the United Kingdom could continue to operate without these subsidies. On the other hand there is no government control of university activities other than in the very broadest terms, and no overt political pressure is brought to bear on decisions affecting academic policy.

On the question of financial support for undergraduates the situation is simply that grants from public funds are automatically available to any school-leaver who is offered a place by a university. This does not mean however that there is an enormous intake, because in practice entrance is controlled by two factors: the limited number of available places and the qualifications demanded by universities before an application can be considered. In fact it is very difficult to gain entry to a university course, but nobody is prevented for financial reasons. In general the minimum qualifications for entry are reasonable in terms of the facilities available at schools, for example in London entry to a course for an Arts degree requires among other things a standard of achievement in at least two languages that brighter children can reach at the end of five or six years' work at school.

One direct result of the shortage of places for undergraduates in universities is that most school-leavers with suitable qualifications tend to apply to several universities, and in some cases even leave open the final choice of subject to be studied. In consequence, the universities and the subjects that enjoy a higher prestige value tend to "cream-off" the best students, since they are sure of their offers of places being accepted.

The state of affairs just outlined inevitably has an effect on the somewhat flexible British school system, since in practice a relatively small proportion of school-leavers can be expected to go to a university, and in this connection it is important to bear in mind that a wealthy background cannot nowadays guarantee a university place, since although there are private schools there are no private universities in Britain. It is natural that the very keen competition for university places should influence the attitude of school-teachers, and that those pupils whose qualities mark them out early as potential undergraduates should receive special attention. The way this works out in practice depends on the kind of school involved; but in the state grammar schools as well as in private schools and grant-aided schools[1] there is a strong tendency for the school curriculum to be geared to a considerable extent to the needs of potential undergraduates.

---

[1] Private schools receiving a grant-in-aid from the government.

The net result of this is that when a student at the age of 18 enters a university he always has behind him three or more years of school education that was specifically designed as a foundation for his work as an undergraduate. This means that in the majority of cases he continues in a subject closely akin to what he has studied at school. There are of course those who are more independent and who prefer to break new ground, but the number of these is relatively small, and experience shows that they do not necessarily make the best students.

A further consequence to the close connection between school and university is that in those subjects which are in school curricula as well as in university syllabuses (e.g., French, Geography, History) the ability of a candidate to cope with a degree course can be assessed on the basis of his performance in the subject at school. In fact in most cases only those who have achieved a certain minimum standard in the subject in the examination they sit while still at school are considered in making an allocation of available places. In the case of university subjects that are not normally taught at school (e.g., Anthropology, Arabic, Philosophy), the work done at school in preparation for entry to a university is inevitably of more general relevance only. Nevertheless experience shows that it is possible to judge on the basis of a school-leaver's performance in certain subjects whether or not he is likely to be able to follow a particular degree course successfully.

(b) Purpose of Arts Degree Courses

University courses leading to an Arts degree, i.e., in the Humanities, have certain characteristics that distinguish them from those in other Faculties, as for example Medicine or the Social Sciences. Probably the most important kind of course is that designated by the term "Honours", and in fact in any discussion of Arts degrees in a United Kingdom context it is normally assumed that what is in question is an Honours course of this type. The significant thing about such courses is that they are based on an integrated syllabus and cannot be built up at will from unrelated units. Thus for example the syllabus of Honours course in German includes:

(a) 1 paper concerned with the development of the German language,
(b) to (e) 4 papers concerned with the literature of various periods from the Middle High German period to the present day, including specified texts,
(f) translation from and into German,
(g) essay in German,
(h) an oral examination to test scholarship as well as command of the spoken language,
(i) one subsidiary subject--either another language or one of a variety of other subjects such as economics, general linguistics, geography, history, logic, and music.

In order to put this question into perspective it is necessary to distinguish three main ideas that are present in Honours courses in Arts subjects, although the emphasis is not necessarily the same in each case.

(i) The 3-year Honours course for an Arts degree has one characteristic in common with specialist degree courses in various other branches of learning: it is regarded as an essential prerequisite for more advanced academic work in the field in question. Such courses are so designed that they provide an adequate training in a specified discipline in order to equip the student with all the skills and insights he will need if he is going on to do graduate work. In addition, there is the clear expectation that anyone who successfully follows such a course will develop a measure of intellectual maturity, so that in addition to having acquired expertise in the subject he will have developed a critical faculty, and will be capable of exercising independent thought. For this reason, a graduate who has obtained a sufficiently good result in his final examination is considered to be adequately qualified to make a start immediately on a Ph.D. research project under supervision but without any further teaching. In order to provide adequately for the range of training that is required, all syllabuses for Honours degrees in Arts are designed with a number of special subjects or options from which the student may make an individual choice under the guidance of his teachers.

(ii) An important respect in which Honours degrees in Arts subjects are considered to be different from specialist degrees in other fields is that the course for such a degree provides a good general education no matter what the subject studied. An essential goal of such courses is that the student should acquire a breadth of outlook in addition to any specialist ability that he may develop. Any proposed syllabus that does not fulfill this condition is unlikely to be acceptable for inclusion among the established Honours degrees. In this connection it is clear why courses in "Language and Literature" are central to the system of Arts degrees, since they enlarge the student's field of vision by introducing him to the culture of a people by means of a study in depth of their ways of thought and their attitude to life and environment as reflected in their literature and history. Proficiency in the language is at the same time a by-product of the study and one of the basic skills necessary for an adequate understanding of the literature, whereas even a high degree of competence in the operation of the language does not by itself necessarily contribute to a student's breadth of oulook.

(iii) It is undeniable that many Honours courses in Arts subjects have acquired an important vocational or professional aspect. Thus for example if someone is applying for a post as a teacher of French or wishes to enter some branches of the consular service, the possession of an Honours degree in French might be regarded as an essential qualification. The significant thing however is that considerations of this kind never have any bearing on the formulation of syllabuses. In other words the Honours degree system in Arts subjects is designed to guarantee that even if the intention of a student in following a course is to obtain a vocational or professional qualification he will nonetheless receive a good general education in the process. This naturally bears on the introduction of new subjects, since each proposal is judged primarily on whether it is suitable as an Honours course rather than on its utility, but this question is more suitably discussed in the next sub-section.

(c) Future Careers of Arts Graduates

In spite of all that has been said under the previous heading, it is clear that from the point of view of the student the bearing of his future career of the degree he hopes to obtain is of paramount importance. A university cannot formulate its policy without regard to the uses to which its degrees are put or the esteem in which they are held. Thus even where the principles described in the preceding section fully operate, it is inevitable that courses in some subjects should enjoy a higher measure of popularity because they seem to be more relevant to the students' future careers. Consequently, whenever proposals to introduce new subjects in the Honours syllabus are being formulated, some consideration has to be given to the question of their value to the graduate in his life after leaving the university. It would clearly be possible to encumber the system of Honours degrees with a large number of valid subjects that might in fact never be chosen by any prospective undergraduate because they are thought to be too exotic.

In the British university system with its somewhat restricted intake of undergraduates, it is perhaps not surprising that a high proportion of undergraduates reading for Honours degrees in an Arts subject are likely to become school-teachers. In such cases it is almost certain that the subject being studied at the university is the same as the one the student expects to teach when he obtains a post in a school, and in any case an Honours degree in his subject is almost always a prerequisite for a successful career. This means that very many undergraduates inevitably regard their course at the university as a vocational training whatever may be the intention of those who devise and teach the syllabuses.

On this question of the use of Honours degrees in Arts as a professional qualification for school-teachers there is one further aspect of the British educational system that has some bearing on university policy. There are in effect two different salary scales for school-teachers, one for those who have a good Honours degree (i.e., 1st or 2nd class, but not 3rd class) and a lower one for those who do not, and this differential scale operates irrespective of the subject of the degree. In other words, someone who has a Honours degree in a subject that is not taught in schools, as for example Anthropology, is nonetheless eligible for the higher salary scale. The difficulty is of course that a degree in such a subject may not appear as a very suitable qualification in the eyes of the people responsible for the appointment of school-teachers. Nevertheless, since teachers are appointed to schools in the United Kingdom exclusively by the authorities of each local school or group of schools, a shortage of suitably qualified applicants for a post sometimes results in a candidate with a degree in a subject not actually figuring in the curriculum being appointed. Nevertheless in such a case his work is usually restricted to low-grade non-specialist teaching, and this limits his prospects of promotion. In effect therefore Honours degrees in certain subjects play a very limited role as a qualification for a career in school teaching.

One type of career for which a good Honours degree in an Arts subject is normally an essential qualification is that in the Administrative Branch of the Civil Service, which is the highest level of government service. The reason for this is that such a degree is regarded as a guarantee that an applicant has had a good general education, and in consequence the regulations for entry into the Service prescribe which subjects are acceptable. In effect, although the university may be satisfied that it does not include among the Arts subjects that may be studied for an Honours degree any that are too specialized to provide the basis for a good general education, it by no means follows that government is prepared to accept this judgment where the subject is considered to be too exotic, e.g., Burmese Language and Literature. This kind of factor, which could restrict the career prospects of graduates in such subjects may make the courses less attractive and may have a bearing on the introduction of new subjects that might fall into the same category.

The other main use to which a degree may be put arises from the fact that for certain types of managerial career an Honours degree is normally required. Among the reasons underlying this requirement is no doubt the assumption that those who succeed in obtaining a good Honours degree will have learned how to handle information as well as having their critical faculty developed. However in the case of some of the less commonly studied subjects other factors may operate, and these seem to vary according to the type of managerial post in question. Thus, if there are two applicants for a post in a Middle East oil company who have similar qualities in every respect except that one has an Honours degree in say Modern Arabic and the other a degree in a more popular subject, it is likely that the graduate in Arabic will be preferred, since his specialized knowledge may have some practical usefulness to the company. Nevertheless experience shows that a degree that seems to have some relevance to the field in which the company operates is unlikely to counterbalance a deficiency in the personal qualities of a candidate. In respect to managerial careers in more general fields, it seems that a degree in an exotic subject can be a positive disadvantage to an applicant, since the instinctive reaction of those considering applications appears to be that any student who elects to study an unusual subject is likely to be an "odd" person, who may prove to be unable to work within the accepted patterns of managerial activity.

The general conclusion about the bearing of the subject of his degree on the future career of a graduate must therefore be that, apart from certain special cases, the more exotic the subject the less the degree will enhance his prospects of a successful career.

2. Introduction of African Languages into Degree Syllabuses

It was within the total system of Honours degrees, the more important aspects of which have just been briefly outlines, that the possibility and desirability of introducing the study of certain African languages and literatures had to be considered. However, before these questions are discussed in detail it is necessary to put them into some historical perspective by describing a few of the events that led to their being posed in the first place. In fact it was just over fifteen years ago that serious thought began to be given to the feasibility of including African languages among the subjects that could be studied for an Honours degree in London, and it will be convenient to analyze the situation under two headings and to consider separately the practicability and the suitability of the proposal that some of these languages should be incorporated into syllabuses for Honours degrees.

(a) Reasons Underlying the Proposal

During the period immediately following the second world war there were several things which combined to produce a radical change in the status of the study of African languages in the University of London.

(i) In addition to the general expansion of university resources that took place in the United Kingdom in the 1950's there was an independent development in the field of Oriental and African studies, as a result of which considerable financial support was provided for these studies from government funds. One facet of government policy in this respect was the decision that the study of African languages should be concentrated in London, and in fact even today there is no post for dealing with any African language in any other university in the United Kingdom. The immediate result of this increase in financial resources was that the academic personnel working on African languages rose abruptly from six at the beginning of 1947 to no fewer than fourteen five years later. There were of course many difficulties encountered in the finding of suitable people to fill the posts for which funds were available, especially as it was held to be desirable that a university teacher responsible for courses in a living language should have had direct experience of the language in the field. An important factor in the resolving of this problem was the requirement of an Honours degree in an Arts subject as a qualification for entry into the Colonial Service, which meant that former members of the Service, who were required to achieve proficiency in one or more of the local languages, provided a natural field for the recruitment of academic staff, and this had two direct consequences. On the one hand it was possible to find suitable candidates for more than one post in the more widely-used languages such as Hausa and Swahili, which meant that the study of such languages could be on a broad basis. On the other hand the fact that all those appointed had already had several years experience of operating the language in question in its natural context in Africa gave them both a special approach to questions of language teaching and at the same time a flying start in carrying out studies in depth into the literature.

(ii) The greatly increased government financial support for universities that characterized the period from the late 1940's onward inevitably introduced additional dimensions into the planning of degree courses, if only because of the natural tendency of those responsible for the allocation of funds to regard departments with undergraduates as having a high claim on the available resources. Conversely, a group of teachers with no students reading for Honours degrees could in certain circumstances find themselves placed unfavourably in respect to continued receipt of government funds, especially if there was competition for funds due to some reduction in the overall financial provision. In the field of African languages, the large sums that had been made available for the rapid expansion of academic staff had in no way been accompanied by any hint of the desirability of devising Honours syllabuses to include such languages. Nevertheless the very presence in the university of increased teaching resources naturally led to discussion about the possibility of such a development. Furthermore, during the period when the end of the colonial era was in sight it seemed unlikely that there would be much demand for the teaching of African languages, unless this could be introduced at the undergraduate level. It was therefore necessary to investigate the possibility of introducing African languages into the Honours system. Moreover, since experience shows that having to teach language and literature to undergraduates is an important stimulus to research, it seemed essential to try to introduce undergraduate teaching for at least some of the African languages for which teachers had been appointed.

(iii) With the great increase of interest in the languages of Africa that marked the post-war years there was naturally a demand for opportunities to undertake research work in this field leading to a higher degree, in particular to a Ph.D. Although the regulations of the University of London allow a graduate of another university to come and work for a London Ph.D., where the subject is not one commonly studied at undergraduate level, the question of adequate preliminary qualifications may be a difficult one. In this connection it is important to stress that in the view of the teachers of African languages in London the study of an African language and its literature is not simply a branch of applied linguistics, and for this reason a long-term view of graduate studies requires that there must be some kind of undergraduate studies in the same field if graduate work is to be well-founded. This again provided an urgent reason for investigating the possibility of introducing African languages into Honours syllabuses.

(b) Factors Governing the Proposal

As has been noted in the first main section of this paper, an Honours degree must have an integrated syllabus, which means in effect that no subject can be introduced as a component of a syllabus unless it is fairly closely related in some way to the theme of the syllabus as a whole. Thus for example, it is possible to sit an examination for a degree that consists of three equal parts, each dealing with a distinct language, but such a "general" degree could not be equated with an Honours degree, and is in fact specifically excluded from doing so either as a qualification for a higher degree course or for any other purpose for which an Honours degree may be used. This consideration was relevant to proposals to introduce African languages into Honours syllabuses since it meant that something much more would be required than the one-year full-time courses that were available in a number of languages.

The most important way in which an Honours course would differ from those already available was that it would require much more than a practical approach to the language. In particular it would be necessary to make provision for this study of the literature as an introduction to the ways of thought and patterns of experience of the people who speak the language. In order that such courses should be feasible in any given case, it is necessary that two conditions should be met: there must be an adequate range of available material and there must be experienced teachers who have at their disposal certain basic studies of the language and the literature.

(i) Since the suitability of a subject for inclusion in an Honours syllabus is not determined by its usefulness, in principle any African language could have been considered to see if it fulfilled the other conditions. In practice however the number of languages involved is small, since few African languages have even a modest quantity of literature. Moreover, if a language and its literature is to provide a suitable course of study for this purpose, there must be adequate reference works such as dictionaries and grammars in addition to a suitable corpus of textual material. One factor that makes it feasible to consider more languages for this purpose than might otherwise be the case is that the number of students may be sufficiently small to make possible the use of typescript or multigraphed material instead of printed works.

(ii) Even where it is decided that the quantity of literature is adequate as a basis for the course, a great deal still needs to be done before it can be considered for inclusion in an Honours syllabus. African languages differ from many European languages, such as German or Spanish, in that there are no standard studies of their literature, a deficiency that can be remedied only by the efforts of those responsible for teaching the language. In effect the apparatus of comment has to be developed in respect as much to the subject matter and form of the literature as to the language, and this can require research on an extensive scale before the subject can be satisfactorily taught to successive generations of undergraduates. Moreover, when a new subject is introduced into the Honours degree system, a great responsibility falls on those who have to plan the courses, which calls for a maturity of specialized experience that cannot be acquired very quickly. A further requirement of the system that operates in London is that for a teacher to be given responsibility in the conduct of an examination for an Honours degree he must have demonstrated his academic competence in the subject by publishing work of sufficiently high quality. This could in certain cases affect the feasibility of introducing a new Honours syllabus since without sufficient numbers of qualified examiners it is clearly impossible to envisage an Honours course in a given subject.

3. African Languages in Honours Syllabuses

It is against the overall situation outlined in the two previous sections that the specific proposals for the introduction of African languages into Honours syllabuses were formulated. It is conceivable that if any of the major factors had been different, the timing as well as the substance of the proposals would not have been the same, which explains why it was necessary to expound in some detail the implications of the situation in London.

In this section of the paper an attempt is made to explain why African languages were introduced in the way they were, and then to describe some of the problems that were encountered in the planning of the courses. In addition, it seemed useful to include some comment on what has been found out in the actual running of the courses together with a few notes on current plans for fresh syllabuses involving African languages.

(a) Fitting Into the Pattern of Honours Degrees

One of the factors that has to be taken into account when any group of teachers in London wishes to devise a new syllabus for an Honours degree in an Arts subject is that all proposals have to be submitted for approval to University Boards where they are discussed by teachers in other related fields within the Arts Faculty. In other words, however much it may be desired to experiment with new subjects, there is a built-in safeguard to ensure that the basic qualities expected in an Honours syllabus are in fact present in each new proposal. Although this imposes certain limitations on the teachers concerned, it does provide them with a full opportunity to draw on the experience of those who have been operating Honours courses in other subjects, and at the same time guarantees that any new degree that is instituted is held in the same esteem as those already established.

The first question that had to be asked was whether or not an Honours syllabus could be devised for a "one-subject" degree in any African language. It did not need much thought to reach the conclusion that neither at the present time nor in the foreseeable future could such a syllabus be envisaged, if only because of the relatively short period of time during which African languages have been studied in depth. There remained the possibility of introducing some African languages into a "two-subject" integrated syllabus. Such a syllabus would involve combining the study of an African language with some other subject in such a way as to ensure a unifying concept throughout the syllabus. In this connection certain facts soon became clear. There seemed at first sight to be a number of subjects that might figure in such a joint syllabus, but ultimately the number of valid combinations proved to be very limited. Thus for example, the very first attempt at devising such a syllabus was based on a proposal to combine certain African languages and History, but it seeon became clear that against the background of a well-established pattern of Honours courses in various branches of History, the historians could think of a syllabus that might include the study of an African language only as another type of History Degree in which the language would play a relatively minor role. The major obstacle to a joint syllabus was that no unifying concept seemed to be available, and in fact although students reading for a degree in African History can include the study of an African language in their course, the instruction they receive is of the practical type, and does not differ from what was normally been available for anybody who needs a knowledge of the language as a "tool."

There was one combination that seemed to meet the essential conditions for an Honours syllabus, and this had as its unifying concept the study of a "people" under two aspects: the language they use to operate the activities of the community and the structure of their society. In this way it was possible to envisage that half the course would be concerned with a study of the language and literature in depth and the other half with the principles of social anthropology and their application to the society within which the language operates. One refinement of the scheme was the inclusion of a course in General Linguistics to provide an additional dimension to the study of the language. This particular combination was accepted as an Honours course just over ten years ago, and has operated under the somewhat misleading title of a course for a degree in "African Studies." For reason arising from the considerations mentioned at the end of the previous section the only languages that were included in the original proposal were Swahili, Sotho and Zulu, to which were added Hausa a year or two later and very recently Amharic.

No combinations with other subjects have so far been introduced, but it is hoped very shortly to have a syllabus including an African Language and Linguistics. A brief outline of these proposals is given under the final heading in this section.

(b) Planning the Syllabus

Under this heading will be discussed in the first place what bearing the general principles involved in Honours courses have on the teaching of an African language, and then some details will be given of how it works out in practice.

(i) As was pointed out in the first section of this paper, the paramount feature of an Honours course in an Arts subject is that it provides for a good general education, and this therefore governs the characteristics of any acceptable syllabus. In respect to an African language this has several important consequences that need to be explained. Most of the non-degree courses in African languages that have been available through the years are of a practical nature, in which skill in the operation of the language in its social context has been the sole aim. In an Honours course however, although skill in operating the language must of necessity be expected of the successful student, this cannot be the main object of the course. In the same way, it is clearly inevitable that an undergraduate reading for a degree of this kind will acquire a large amount of information about the language in question, but this by itself cannot give validity to the course unless at the same time he develops some measure of intellectual maturity. Another point that distinguishes the study of a language in an Honours course is that it is not simply concerned with the cultural context within which the language operates; any satisfactory "practical" course will also do that. An Honours student has to be given insight into the standards of values of the speakers of the language, as well as their modes of thought and historical sense as reflected in their literature. This means in effect that the teacher has to be far more than an efficient instructor of the language in its various aspects; he must also be an interpreter of the people and their environment. Having himself reached the point where his familiarity with the literature enables him to gain an "inside view," he then is in a position to carry his students along with him until they absorb something of his breadth of outlook.

(ii) To achieve the objectives just mentioned the syllabus has to contain certain basic elements. Since the undergraduate commencing such a course has no prior experience of the language, he must be given instruction in its grammatical and lexical apparatus in addition to its phonetic and phonological features. He must also be taught to operate the spoken language, since at the end of his course his proficiency in this respect will be assessed by an oral test which is an integral part of the final examination. In other words, the student reading for an Honours degree is expected as a matter of course to acquire all the skills that are taught in a "practical" course. Where the undergraduate begins to leave the other students behind is the point at which he begins to study specially selected texts that have been chosen for their literary value and subject matter as much as for their linguistic interest. It is an essential feature of every Honours syllabus in a language and literature subject that a list of specified texts is included, and that extracts from these form the basis of one or more papers in the final examination. Apart from the study of such texts in respect of their subject-matter and language, a further important aspect of the course consists of training in the art of translation from suitable texts into English. This provides not only an intellectual exercise but also an opportunity to increase the student's depth of understanding of semantic distinctions both in the language in question and in English. Training of a different kind is provided by exercises in translation from English, since these enable the teacher to assess the student's grasp of the modes of expression characteristic of the language. The normal procedure here is to choose suitable passages, and for the student to attempt to translate them on his own; the teacher then has the opportunity to discuss with each student separately the various points thrown up by his work.

(iii) The precise amount of materials required for the conduct of an Honours course naturally varies from language to language, but in any case since the undergraduate is expected to achieve a proficiency in operating the language not less than that required by the student with a practical aim, it can be assumed that the teachers will have to have all the necessary pedagogical equipment including even audio-visual aids. As to works of reference, a standard dictionary is clearly essential, and is one for which an effective substitute is difficult to imagine. Since explanation of the language of texts must presuppose a frame of reference in the form of a descriptive grammar, something of this kind must also be available, although experience shows that with small numbers of students it is possible to provide for this in the first instance in the form of multigraphed sheets compiled by the teacher himself. Much more important for the Honours student is the corpus of textual material, which has to be sufficiently large to cover most aspects of the life and thought of the people, as well as including works of literary merit. In the case of African languages this is usually a serious problem, but again, where the student body is small the available printed works can be supplemented by typed material of which a standard copy is available for reference in the Library.

(c) Evaluation of Existing Courses

Up to the present the only languages actually taught in the joint degree with Social Anthropology are Hausa and Swahili, although a course in Zulu was given a few years ago. In this attempt to set out some of the things that have been learned from the running of these courses, the details refer specifically to Hausa, since there has been a continuity in the teaching personnel for this subject. The comments under this heading fall into a number of different sub-divisions, including such important questions as the kind of student and the kind of teaching required for the course, as well as the kind of examination that can adequately assess the student's achievements.

(i) Experience has shown that a two-subject Honours course like this is not one that is satisfactory for the average student. In fact, although a student of high quality is able not only to cope with the course, but also to achieve a marked intellectual maturity in following it, those with less ability easily get discouraged by the demands made on them by the study of two subjects as different as an African language and its literature and Social Anthroplogy. Equally a student who happens to show ability in one subject but not in the other can fail to achieve a satisfactory overall result. Moreover, even the good student has found that to begin to study the two subjects de novo and to reach an Honours degree standard in three years places a very heavy load on him, and in consequence the standard length of the course has been increased to four years. It also proved desirable, since most students come straight from school, to provide some orientation courses, which include a general introduction to the study of Africa as well as an introduction to the study of society. What has happened in practice is that these additional courses are given in the first year, and are followed by the standard three-year course for the Social Anthropology part of the syllabus, while the language and literature teaching is spread over the whole of the four years.

(ii) In broad terms the content of the four-year language course, which occupies approximately half of the student's time, is as follows:

1st Year: Throughout the year, introduction to the structure of the language and its vocabulary. In the second term, the study of very simple texts (e.g., booklets produced for the Adult Education Program). In the third term, further texts (e.g., a School Geography Book).

(Note: At the end of the first year a screening preliminary examination includes unseen passages for translation.)

2nd Year: Further instruction in the grammar, together with study of texts which serve to demonstrate a wide variety of structural features. Selected textual material in the language is also prescribed for private study.

3rd and
4th Years: Study of the set texts, together with a steadily decreasing amount of more advanced grammatical instruction.

Throughout
the course: Practice in speaking the language, and exercise in writing essays and in translation from English.

(iii) The conduct of a course of this kind present the teachers with a number of problems, not all of which are capable of a categorical solution. From the angle of the actual subject-matter of the course and its presentation, there are one or two things that may be noted. In a subject that has no long history of university teaching, it is inevitable that there should be a certain experimental quality in some of the courses. In practice this gives the teacher the opportunity to adapt and modify his teaching as he goes along, and in particular to incorporate into the course the fruits of his own experiences as he attempts to interpret the material to his students. One aspect of the teaching that distinguishes these courses from those in subjects that also figure in school curricula is that in the first year much more time has to be given to class work with the teacher. It has been found necessary to devote some six hours a week to this, quite apart from the time allocated to listening to recordings, some of which is also under the supervision of the teacher. The aim of this instruction is to train the student to extrapolate from what he is taught, in other words to make use of what he has learnt by applying it to fresh ranges of material. If he is to learn how to think for himself the student has to be induced to move progressively away from the "frame" approach to the operations of language, however useful such an approach may be in the initial stages. One further point about the organizing of the course has arisen from the difficulty of completely covering all the set texts in classwork. It seems that for some of the more difficult texts it is desirable to provide the students with a standard translation so that the teacher need not feel obliged to go meticulously through the whole of the text in class.

(iv) As was noted in the first section of this paper, the London system of Honours examinations involves a range of papers at the end of the course that covers every part of the syllabus. It is generally admitted that this puts a considerable strain on the candidates, but in the case of the papers dealing with an African language and its literature there seems to be little that could be gained by splitting the examination, since the development of a breadth of outlook and the ability to handle information, which are the main objectives of the course, is likely to be progressively achieved in the latter part of the course. In practice the final examination, which also contains five papers in Social Anthropology, includes: one paper in specified texts, in which selected passages are set for translation, while questions about the language and the subject-matter also have to be answered; one paper of translation from unspecified texts with questions on the language; one paper that includes both translation from English and an essay in the language; one paper on the grammar and syntax; and one paper on General Linguistics in which answers have to be illustrated with examples from the language.

(v) One final comment may be made about the validity of these courses for Africans who may already know the language in question. Such a student is clearly going to find much of the course less arduous than those for whom both the language and its background are exotic. Nevertheless, experience has shown that the parts of the course dealing with Linguistics and Social Anthropology are much more difficult for a student whose mother-tongue is not English, and in consequence the fact that he has to spend less time on the language enables him to give the necessary extra time to the other subjects. In this way, it seems that an African has about the same chance of doing well as an English student.

(d) Present Trends

In a department with so many teachers of African languages it is natural that thought should be given to the possibility of introducing other languages into Honours syllabuses. It seems very unlikely that any additions will be made to the languages figuring in the joint degree with Social Anthropology for two reasons. The Anthropology part of the syllabus includes a paper with a special set of options to match the language in the first part of the syllabus. In other words, for each language there has to be available teaching in the ethnography of the area where the language is spoken, and the resources of the University in this direction are not unlimited. Quite apart from this difficulty however, the experience of the past ten years has raised some doubts about this particular pattern of joint degree. As was noted under the first heading of this section, the unifying concept in a language and Social Anthropology syllabus was that the course consisted of the study of a people under two aspects. Nevertheless, the difference in the presuppositions underlying the method of study of the two subjects can give rise to a conflict in the mind of the student, which can be resolved only if teachers in both parts of the course are sympathetic to the principles involved in the other part. Although there seem to be no theoretical grounds for any essential incompatibility between the two subjects, in practice students rarely appear to find the concept of integration easy to grasp, and in any case frequent switching between detailed language work and sessions devoted say to the discussion of the concepts of social anthropology creates problems of adjustment that are not easily solved. A solution in terms of the rationalization of the timetable, although feasible in principle, is far from easy to achieve in practice.

There are actively being pursued at the present time plans for a different kind of joint syllabus: one in which an African language and its literature will be combined with the study of Linguistics. This combination which will probably be available in October 1967 appears likely to provide a much more satisfactory syllabus. It may seem surprising that proposals of this kind should not have been made before, but it happened that until very recently linguistics was regarded in London as more suitable for graduate study, the most that was available for undergraduates being a general introduction adequate for one paper only in an Honour syllabus. Now however, a complete course is being introduced which leads to three papers in the main branches of linguistics with a set of more specialized options such as historical linguistics, linguistics and the study of literature, psycho-linguistics, and socio-linguistics, from which two more papers can be chosen. This has provided the possibility of a joint syllabus with certain African languages in which there would be an inherent unity, since the two halves would be complementary to each other. What is envisaged is a course in certain languages, including at least Bemba, Somali and Yoruba in the first instance, that would be parallel to the Hausa course outlined above, except that the balance of the teaching may vary according to the characteristics of the language. Moreover, since the study of linguistics will belong to the other part of the degree, it is possible to have five papers on the language instead of four. The general outline of the scheme being prepared is: two papers on texts, specified and unspecified, with questions on both language and subject matter; one paper containing both translation into English of more difficult texts and translation from English; one paper on the structure of the language; and a fifth paper consisting of a choice of one of a set of options.

In devising the courses for these new joint degrees it has been possible to draw on the experience of the teachers who have been responsible for courses in the joint degrees with Social Anthropology, and as a result it is anticipated that the new courses will be educationally of a very high standard and will probably be attractive to the more promising type of potential undergraduates.

4. General Conclusions

It may be useful to draw a few conclusions on some of the general questions that arise in connection with the place of African languages and literatures in undergraduate and graduate work. It is surely not inappropriate to ask whether the widespread development of syllabuses for first degrees in these subjects would ever be likely to fulfill an important role in universities. Our experience in London has demonstrated that it is possible to devise courses that are educationally satisfactory, but time alone can show whether the demand for such courses is likely to justify the enormous outlay of academic resources that they require.

Related to this question is another that concerns graduate work in these fields. At the moment, among the twenty members of the academic staff dealing with African languages and literatures in London, none has a first degree in this field; and it is tempting to wonder whether in fact it would have been effectively advantageous to them if they had. The indications are that, in the formative years of the development of these studies at the undergraduate level, it has been a great advantage that almost all of the teachers involved happen to have a first degree in English, French, German or Classics. At this stage it is impossible to predict whether the introduction of African languages into Honours degrees will stimulate interest in graduate research, although one may hope that it will do so. One consideration is that whereas research into the structure of a language can be carried out on the basis of a knowledge of the general principles of linguistic investigation, a research student in the African field who wished to deal in depth with a subject based on literature would be better equipped if his first degree had included an Honours course in an African language.

It can be argued that since university work is concerned primarily with the enlargement of human knowledge, it does not matter very much whether or not a subject is taught at the undergraduate level. Nevertheless what has happened in other fields seems to suggest that there is something anomalous about high-level research in one of the Humanities that is not matched by the running of undergraduate courses, and this may in fact be the controlling factor in influencing a decision where the introduction of African languages and literatures into degree courses is under consideration.

Discussion

Armstrong: Is consideration given to African literature as a degree course?

Guthrie: No. One is not sure what exactly African literature is or where one should put it in the university program. An M.A. course in area studies at the University of London is being developed with Africa as one area, and this will probably be available in October. One problem is deciding what can be introduced into the course in the way of African languages and literature. People interested in the program have asked whether it wouldn't be possible to do something in African literature. The problem was discussed, and it emerged that African literature written in European languages might be taught. But my colleagues in the department, while they liked the idea, felt that such a program was for undergraduates and should not be included in an M.A. course. I, personally, feel that there is a real subject matter in African literature; particularly oral literature in translation, but I do not know where this could be fitted into the university program. I believe that the University of Leeds offers a diploma in the subject. In England, certain kinds of graduate work can be taken under the umbrella of a diploma, which lacks the academic standing of an M.A., but for which only graduate students are eligible.

Harries: What made you choose "Oral Literature in Translation" as a subject?

Guthrie: Let me suggest that there is a great deal that one can do in the study of West African oral literature, running across language boundaries; work which it would be totally impractical to expect any one individual to deal with in all of the original languages involved. It would be a valid and important academic exercise for some scholar to study the content and form of wide-ranging types of African literature.

Berry: If, though, the comparative study of African literature in the original languages can be done at all, what better place could there be for this study than the School of Oriental and African Studies, where so many experts in African languages are gathered together?

Guthrie: Such work could, certainly be done by the teachers there. But how could students be expected to learn this material?

Harries: Even in one language, the material may be on too difficult a level for the ordinary student to handle.

Guthrie: But it is here that the teacher can introduce the student to the values of the literature, even in translation.

Arnott: I would agree that teaching African literature in translation is entirely worthwhile. Some of our colleagues are finally beginning to come around to our view.

Harries: The whole matter of comparison of oral literatures has hardly been begun.

Arnott: True, this is a problem, but it merely poses the question of deciding at what stage in one's knowledge one can begin teaching. Of course, another problem would arise if a paper on African literature in English were to be introduced into the African studies M.A. course. The judging of the paper would require collaboration with scholars of English literature. In teaching oral literature in translation, one could not do justice to the original, but still a great deal of material could be taught quite effectively.

Guthrie: Yes. So much could be done with good translations, that it would be wrong not to teach oral literature. If I had a student who wanted to study translations from a language I knew, I would feel that I could give the student some insight into the significance of the literature, though of course the student would not catch all of the meanings that one could from knowing the language.

Carter: I notice that at the University of Edinburgh, which gives an M.A. in African studies, all of the students going for this degree seem to be Americans. Is it possible that the same will hold true for the African area studies M.A. at the University of London?

Guthrie: We will just have to wait and see, of course. The theory behind the M.A. in African studies is, however, that those who have taken a B.A. in, for instance, history and who desire an African orientation could major in African history at the M.A. level and minor in two related African fields.

AFRICAN FOLKLORE STUDIES AT BERKELEY

William Bascom

There is no formal program of African Studies on the Berkeley campus, in part because the African Studies Center was established on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California. U.C.L.A. had applied for a Ford Foundation grant before Berkeley had any group of Africanists on its faculty, but Lloyd Fallers and I were in Anthropology and Carl Rosberg was in the Department of Political Science before the time the grant was awarded. Although the grant was to the University of California, it was a foregone conclusion that the Center would be at Los Angeles. At that time President Clark Kerr opposed the duplication of specialized programs on the University's campuses, and an attempt was made to have the Center at U.C.L.A. serve the entire University. Africanists at Berkeley have received some funds to support research and we have benefitted by lectures given by Africanists invited to Los Angeles, but most of the grant has been devoted to activities on the U.C.L.A. campus.

Despite this there has been a continuing development of interest in African studies at Berkeley, particularly in Political Science and in Anthropology, and as reported in the April, 1966, issue of the African Studies Bulletin sixty to seventy students at Berkeley are currently specializing in African studies. David Apter, Clement Moore, and Carl Rosberg represent Political Science, and Desmond Clark, Elizabeth Colson, Melvin Perlman, and I represent Anthtopology. Herbert Baker is in Botany, Martin Klein in History, and John Letiche in Economics.

Rather than attempting to establish an African Studies Center at Berkeley, we decided several years ago to organize an informal Committee for African Studies which was done under the aegis of the Institute for International Studies. This decision was based both on the policy against duplication and on a rather unanimous desire to avoid the additional commitments which the administration of a Center would entail. With the growing number and size of the University's campuses, and with the increasing trend toward decentralization of authority, it might be possible either now or in a few years to have a Center at Berkeley approved, but a number of us feel that it would be unwise to attempt this now in view of the political situation in Africa.

The Committee has held conferences, arranged lecture series, sponsored guest lecturers, published reprints, stimulated the recruitment of Africanists through regular departmental appointments, and offered guidance to students, and its members have sent their students to Africa for field research. Its mode of operation has proved its flexibility, within the limitations of its small financial support. Thus far it has had little to do with folklore, which has had its own history.

There has been a long and distinguished history of interest in folklore at Berkeley, stimulated largely by Professor Robert H. Lowie in Anthropology, Professor Archer Taylor in German, Professor Griswold Morley in Spanish, and Professor Walter Hart in the Department of English. Professor Lowie alone directed six M.A. theses and eight Ph.D. theses on folklore while he was in the Department of Anthropology. Of the thirty six Fellows of the American Folklore Society, the late Grant Loomis, Professors Emeritus Ann Gayton and Archer Taylor, and Professor Bertrand Bronson and I are from Berkeley, and Past Presidents of the American Folklore Society include Alfred L. Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, Archer Taylor, Ann Gayton, and myself. And there are other folklorists of international stature, including Wolfram Eberhard in Sociology and Joseph Fontenrose in Classics.

After I cameto Berkeley in 1957 I began to appreciate the great strength in the field of folklore which existed on the campus, although I was not yet aware that two dozen more scholars had at least marginal interests in it. Nevertheless there was no program in folklore, and each one of us was working in our own corner of the campus with only occasional social contacts with each other. I felt that some program should be organized, but with my commitments to Africa and to the Lowie Museum I knew I could not undertake it myself. Meanwhile I had begun to teach my course on Folklore, continuing the subject after Archer Taylor's retirement. It began with 74 students in 1960 and normally runs around 100, which surprised both the Dean and my colleagues in the Department. In part because of the obvious interest in the subject, Alan Dundes, whose Ph.D. from Indiana is in Folklore, was brought to our Department in 1964 and his course on folklore drew 161 students that year.

With Dundes able and willing to undertake the administrative duties, we began to move toward a folklore program. We first arranged a luncheon meeting, which was attended by eighteen persons interested in folklore, where it was agreed that something should be done to give organization and direction to folklore studies on the campus. Dundes and I approached the Dean, who suggested that we plan an interdisciplinary program in the Graduate Division leading, initially, to an M.A. degree in Folklore. We then saw the Graduate Dean, who appointed an Ad Hoc Study Committee to consider the desirability of establishing this degree. After some delays, we submitted a formal proposal for this degree, and eventually it was approved. I was appointed chairman of the guiding committee, but Alan Dundes is handling advising and most administrative matters. We began the M.A. program in Folklore in the fall of 1965 with eight students, three more than we had expected because announcements of it were circulated so late.

Our aim is a folklore program which is not simply interdisciplinary, but which combines the two major streams of interest in folklore--that of the humanities and that of the social sciences--and which also unites two predominant methodological approaches to folklore--the anthropological and the historical/comparative. The major stress is on verbal art, but our aim is to cover folklore in its broadest, Thomsian, sense and courses on the ballad and folk art are among those currently offered.

We asked for no additions to staff, wishing to take advantage of the talent already available on campus. Rather we have tried, successfully in the case of Sociology, to convince departments to permit folklorists on their staff to offer courses on folklore. And like the Committee for African Studies, we have also been trying to convince departments to consider our interests when making their regular appointments. We are operating this year with a budget of $200, less even than that available for African studies.

We asked for an M.A. program, anticipating that students would come into it with a B.A. in English, French, Anthropology, or some other subject, and if they wished to continue toward a Ph.D. they could do so in the same subject. We were happy with this arrangement initially both because we thought that it would be easier for students to find teaching positions, and because we wanted to proceed slowly and see how things would go. However, we soon found that many of the best students interested in the program already had an M.A. or its equivalent in graduate study, and we felt required to recommend them to the Ph.D. programs at Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Already, before the end of the first year of the M.A. program, our plans have changed, due to a handsome outside offer made to Alan Dundes. The Dean has suggested that we formally request a Ph.D. program in folklore, and that we plan for the establishment of a separate Department of Folklore. We have not yet acted on these two proposals, because a third matter has required immediate attention. Since group major programs do not have independent budgets, a position has been established under the Chancellor's office which can be used to bring visiting folklorists to Berkeley attached to any department, provided that the department is agreeable. We are currently negotiating with Carl Tillhagen of Sweden for the fall quarter of next year, and with Americo Paredes for the winter and spring quarters. Moreover, the Department of Anthropology has agreed to pay for the cost of bringing Paredes, who could not have been invited if we had not had this position. Francis Lee Utley, a Past President of the American Folklore Society, and Richard Dorson, the head of the Folklore Institute at the University of Indiana, have expressed an interest in coming the following year. With this arrangement it would be possible, provided that salaries could be kept within the financial limit, to bring six folklorists on a half-time basis in a single year.

Thus far I have been speaking about the development of African Studies and of Folklore Studies without saying anything about the study of African Folklore at Berkeley. In fact, apart from the dual interests of myself and Ethel Albert (who regrettably leaves us this year), the two programs have been separate; but African folklore is not being neglected.

In the past few years I have published two survey articles on African folklore,[1] one of which contains a brief survey of African literature. The bibliographic research which led to the other is continuing, with diminishing returns as might be expected, but I have now located collections of 50 or more tales for 98 African groups, the additional ones being the Afar, Chokwe, Galla, Kuba or Bushongo, Tswana, Twareg, Zande and the Beni-Snus, a Berber group in Algeria. The card file bibliography, which includes small collections of prose narratives and other forms as well as major collections, will be invaluable for the research, noted below, which is being undertaken by graduate students. I have also recently completed a lengthy monograph on Ifa divination, including the Yoruba texts and the translation of 186 verses, many of which incorporate traditional myths and folktales.

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[1] William Bascom, "Folklore and Literature" in The African World: A Survey of Social Research (R. A. Lystad, ed), New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965: 469-490, 558-560. "Folklore Research in Africa" Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 77, No. 303, 1964: 12-31.

Alan Dundes, although he is not an Africanist, has published an article on Tunisian trickster tales, one on Yoruba proverbs, and one on Yoruba Wellerisms,[2] and he has been recording verbal art from other African societies on tape, using African students at Berkeley as informants. Some have proved to be exceptionally good, and unique Kiga material has been recorded. We propose to have students in the folklore program record verbal art from African and other students on the campus, which has the largest number of students from abroad of any campus in the country.

In teaching I have always drawn heavily on African materials in my course on folklore, and in recent years Dahomean Narrative has been assigned reading. In 1964 I began a small graduate seminar in African folklore using a selected sample of East African societies for both a comparative study of folktales and an investigation of the relation between folklore and culture. This seminar was repeated this year and is scheduled to be offered again next year, each time using a different sample. Abstracts of the tales prepared by the students will be deposited in the Folklore Archives which Alan Dundes has established. These archives already contain materials, in varying amounts, from the Amharic peoples, the Ashanti and other Akan, the Bakuba, Baluba, Bapende, Batetela, Duala, Gola, Ibo, Kiga, Kikuyu, Kiso (Swahili), Kpelle, Krio (Creole), Liso, Malinke, Mbunga, Shona, Vai, and Yoruba.

A central feature of the M.A. program in folklore is a new seminar, headed by Alan Dundes, which is addressed by folklorists in the Bay Area. Thirty meetings have been scheduled for the current academic year, in the course of which participants are hearing reports on "Ifa Divination and Folklore" (Yoruba) by myself, "The Cultural Functions of Proverbs" (Ovambo) by Edwin Loeb, "Research in East African Tale Typology" by E. Ojo Arewa, a graduate student from Nigeria, "Research in Hausa Folklore" by Tom Lanagan, a graduate student who has completed his field work, and "Research in Kaguru Folklore" by Thomas Beidelman of Duke University, currently at Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford.

Of greater significance is the fact that Mr. Arewa has undertaken a tale type index for the northern part of the East Cattle Area for his Ph.D. dissertation, and another graduate student in anthropology is planning to prepare a motif index for the Congo (Leopoldville). While these indexes are tools rather than ends in themselves, they can be helpful in questions other than historical ones; they and the comparative approach can contribute to studies of the relation of folklore and culture. No tale-type index has been made for African tales, as Klipple restricted her index to tales with European analogues,[3] and the only motif index is for the Guinea Coast.[4]

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[2] Alan Dundes and Taoufik Bradai, "Tales of a Tunisian Trickster" Southern Folklore Quarterly, Vol. 27, 1963: 300-315. E. Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes, "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore" American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, 1964: 70-85. Alan Dundes, "Some Yoruba Wellerisms, Dialogue Proverbs, and Tongue-Twisters" Folklore, Vol. 75, 1964: 113-120.

[3] May Augustus Klipple, African Folktales with Foreign Analogues. Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1936.

[4] Kenneth W. Clarke, A Motif-Index of the Folktales of Culture Area V, West Africa. Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1957.

Because of the amount of work involved, we have decided to partition Africa again and to leave the problem of continental indexes until indexes for the various regions have been compiled. We are coordinating our efforts with Daniel Crowley at the University of California, Davis, whose students are considering an index for the area south of the Congo, and we wish to coordinate with anyone else who is interested in this project.

A significant by-product is the translation of Frank Edgar's three volume work on Hausa folklore,[5] even though we cannot claim credit for it. This important collection of Hausa folktales has been unavailable to folklore scholars since its publication was completed half a century ago. When Tom Lanagan was preparing for his field work among the Hausa, I discussed with him the need for a translation, and two years ago while he was studying Hausa at U.C.L.A. he was able to persuade Neil Skinner to undertake it. Skinner has been working on this while he is in New Zealand, and has already completed two volumes which he can supply in Xerox. They have already proved valuable to me in my research on Ifa divination. When the third volume is completed, we will see what can be done about publication, but this will depend on the contents of a recently announced Book of Hausa folktales being published by Oxford University Press.[6]

This is admittedly a small beginning when there is so much to be done, but it is bound to grow as the new folklore program expands. With the recent rapid developments in folklore, and with the distinguished folklorists and Africanists already at Berkeley, there is good reason to look to the future with optimism.

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[5] Frank Edgar, Litafi na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa Litafi na Farako Belfast: W. Erskine Mayne. 3 vols. 1911-1913: xviii 435; xvi 463, xvi 464.

[6] H. A. S. Johnston, A Selection of Hausa Stories. Oxford Library of African Literature, 1966: 296.

Discussion

Armstrong: Have you and your colleagues urged specialization on your students or envisaged doing so when a doctoral program has been established?

Bascom: Students do develop their own special interests, and thus no special pressure is needed.

Armstrong: Have the University of California folklorists been experimenting with methodological procedures other than elaborating the motif index, which has already been started?

Bascom: As an example of new methodology, let me cite Dundas's interest in structural analysis, particularly in defining the "real" in American Indian tales. This area of endeavor deserves, of course, more exploration than it has thus far received. We also have a specialist in Chinese and Turkish folklore who is looking into the Chinese Communist use of folklore to further their propaganda campaigns.

TALE, TELLER AND AUDIENCE IN AFRICAN SPOKEN NARRATIVE

A. C. Jordan

To overcome the difficulties experiences by Africanist folklorists and lexicographers in trying to draw a clear line of demarcation between one narrative genre and another, I have decided to classify the genres as understood by the language communities I have specially selected for this paper. These are the Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa. It is true that they have no formal literary or philosophical definition of myth, legend, or tale, but from their use of the terms for types of narrative in every-day speech, one gets a clear idea of the implicit classification of the genres. The term ntsomi (Xhosa), nsumo (Zulu), or tsomo (Sotho) is generally understood to mean the fictitious. Thus the Xhosa expression, ukwenza intsomi, is commonly used for "telling a made-up story." The favorite exclamations one hears when an incredible or extraordinary occurrence is reported are: "Don't tell me a ntsomi!", "What a ntsomi!", "Have you ever heard such a ntsomi?" The expression is used also euphemistically for "telling a lie." A ntsomi is a type of tale that is not supposed to be told in the daytime, and anyone who violates this custom "will develop horns." Hence, if a child has done wrong and tries to get out of trouble by telling lies, the mother usually says, "My child, if you don't want to develop horns, don't tell a ntsomi in the daytime."

When a legend or old occurrence is being narrated, skeptics among the audience usually indicate by comment or exclamation or exchange of glances that they distinguish between the historical and the fabulous. The Xhosa accept as a siganeko or mbali "historical event" what sounds possible and credible and reject as buntsomi "fabulous" what they regard as impossible or incredible in the exploits of the legendary hero. For example, they would accept as part of the mbali the traditional descriptions of the physical features of the Bhaca warrior-king, Madzikana (d. 1840): that he was an extraordinarily tall, broad-chested, strong, hairy-bodied man who beard reached down to his navel. They would also accept it as part of the mbali and a siganeko in Madzikane's life that when he was defeated by the Thembu and their allies, he would rather be killed by his personal guard with one of his own spears than by a Thembu warrior with a Thembu spear. But they would reject as buntsomi the famous story that Madzikane owned a large number of black virgin heifers each one of which, one being struck on its pelvis with the king's magic wand, developed a huge udder and produced large quantities of milk to feed the Bhaca warriors before they went to battle. A narrative that is based or supposed to be based on historical fact is a mbali even if, as is almost always the case, it has some buntsomi "fabulous" features. The story of Madzikane is therefore a mbali, not a ntsomi, and any specific event in Madzikane's life is a siganeko. The equivalent of mbali would therefore seem to be legend in English.

Narratives dealing with the creation of the world, deities, the origin of things and natural phenomena are not so easy to classify even by implication. True they are easy to distinguish from animal tales, because everyone knows that beasts and birds cannot speak or make fires and roast meat, but they are not as easy to distinguish from tales in which the heroes are human beings. "Myth" has no equivalent in these languages. How a narrative is to be classified depends on how the language community regards it. If it is regarded as "something that really happened" it is a mbali or siganeko: if it is regarded as "just something made up by people" it is a ntsomi. Thus a mbala in one language community may be a ntsomi in another or in one and the same language community, a narrative that is regarded as a mbali by some may be regarded as a ntsomi by others. Death came into the world because the chameleon, who was sent by the Creator to go and tell the people that "man will not die," was too slow. He was outstripped by the lizard who carried the message that "man will die" so that when he at last arrived with the first message, the people had "accepted the lizard's message." To those communities who so believe that this is "something that really happened" that a lizard about the house is an omen of death, the story is a mbali. But to the great majority who even allow their children to use the lizard as something to play with, it is a mere ntsomi.

In this paper, the term tale is used for that type of narrative that is regarded by a Bantu-language community as "just something made up by people" and therefore implicitly classified as a ntsomi. Tales fall into two main divisions, namely, animal tales and human tales. Animal tales are narratives in which the characters are animals with human attributes, each species of animal representing a recognisable type in human society. A human tale is a narrative in which the protagonist and other leading characters are human beings. In between there is a minor division that may be called animal-human tales. In this type, both animals and human beings are fully involved.

The typical animal tale is a comic satire in which one individual of the smallest species dupes one or more individuals of the largest ones, and sometimes the whole of the animal kingdom. The Hare, the Jackal and the Tortoise are the favourite tricksters. They are always depicted as exceedingly cunning and relying on their wits. Large animals such as the Elephant, the Hippopotemus and the Lion are depicted as slow-witted. The small ones amuse themselves by playing tricks on the big ones. In general, animal tales deal with the superficial and the petty in human relations, and their main function is to amuse. The audience that is familiar with this type of tale always knows before hand that the big animal is going to be outwitted but the tale is never dull because action is lively and the listener is kept guessing how the wily little animal is going to come out each time. There are even tales in which a subtle distinction is made between mere cunning and real wisdom. The Hare relies on his cunning, on the sharpness of his long ears and on speed. The Tortoise has neither long ears nor speed and therefore relies on knowledge. He does not move fast, has his eyes and ears close to the ground at all times and has a hard shell with which to cover his store of knowledge. He looks like a rock and therefore can easily be passed by without being noticed. But above all, he has the ability to hide his head under his shell, so that no one knows what he thinks. The Hare is aware of this difference and respects the Tortoise. When his life is in real danger, the Hare appeals to the Tortoise. The latter comes to the rescue, but not before he has made some contemptuous remarks about the Hare's intellectual limitations.

It must not be thought that all animal tales are amusing. In fact, some of the Hare's tricks are positively revolting. According to one tale, the Hare offered to look after the Lioness's cubs while the Lioness went looking for food. As soon as she was gone, the Hare killed all the cubs burned their bodies to ashes, and then ran away. Knowing that the Lioness would be on his trail, he went to Mother Baboon's and offered to look after her little ones while she was working in the fields. As soon as she was gone, the Hare taught the Baby Baboons the following song:

Leader: *Where, O where are the Lion's cubs?*
Chorus: *We strangled, roasted, ate them all.*
O, what a feast! O, what a feast!

The Baby Baboons enjoyed this song, and as soon as they could sing it well, the Hare told them to go on singing while he went to fetch their mother home so that she could see how well he had taught them. Meanwhile, the Lioness was on the Hare's trail, and when she entered Mother Baboon's house and heard this song, she killed everyone of the Baby Baboons.

It is not at all surprising that according to some versions of the Hare cycle, it was after this wicked deed that the Hare died an ignoble death. The story is that when the Lioness told her husband what had happened, the latter swore that this time he would hunt the Hare until he caught him and killed him. The Hare saw the Lion approaching and ran into a hole that was too small for the Lion to enter. But the Lion stood over the hole, determined not to return to his wife without carrying out his revenge. Every now and then, the Hare crept up to the mouth of the hole, but as soon as he saw the Lion's whiskers, he withdrew in terror. This went on for a long time until it dawned upon the Lion that the terror inspired by his whiskers could keep the Hare in that hole for the rest of his life. So he pulled them off, laid them carefully over the hole and went back home to comfort his wife. According to some versions, some time after the Lion had gone the wind blew away the whiskers and the Hare came out and ran for his life. But according to more relentless ones, he kept on creeping up and withdrawing, creeping up and withdrawing, until after some days he died of fright and cold and hunger in the hole.

The best tellers of animal tales are found among men, understandably because men know the habits of animals better than women. While it is not done to tell a human tale in the daytime, there is no rigid custom about animal tales. They can be told any time of day anywhere: among idlers lounging and whiling away the time, among herdboys in the pastures while the cattle graze with relish or chew the cud, among men fencing a homestead, among men at a beer gathering or, like the Canterbury Tales, among people on a journey, in order that the travellers may not "feel the road." Even the comments from the audience are much freer in animal tales. The witty may make jokes while the narrative goes on, and ideas for "fattening" the narrative may come from the imaginative. Among the Xhosa-speaking, even the customary *Kwaathi ke kaloku ngantsomi* "It came about according to some tale" that announces the beginning, and the concluding *Kuuphela kwantsomi* "It's the end of the tale" are very often omitted, the former because any trivial incident or joke may occasion the telling of an animal tale, the latter because a tale of that nature is more often than not followed by roars of laughter from teller and audience alike.

One of the most popular tales is *The Contest of the Birds*. It relates how the birds decided to choose a king. The bird that soared the highest and remained longest in the sky would immediately be proclaimed "king of all the birds, those that fly and these that walk on the ground." When the race started, the Grass-Warbler, tiniest of the birds, hopped smartly on the back of the eagle, knowing that on such an exciting occasion his weight could not be felt by the Eagle. The birds tried in small and large numbers and dropped on the ground, and the only one to be seen in the sky was the Eagle, high up in the clouds. The birds on the ground hailed the Eagle as king as agreed, but just as he was descending, he heard "Ting-ting! Ting-ting" and looking up quickly, he saw the Grass Warbler just above him. The angry demand for an explanation provoked such an insolent reply from the Grass-Warbler that the Eagle, feeling it was beneath his dignity to quarrel with "such a small thing" continued his flight down and landed on the ground, little thinking that this action on his part was giving the Grass-Warbler a grand opportunity not only to assert that he had soared highest but also to demonstrate, while all the birds looked on in astonishment, that he had remained longest in the sky. When the Grass-Warbler finally landed, there was such a dispute that the birds had to change the venue, leaving the Grass-Warbler a prisoner in a hole guarded by the Owl, who was elected to this position because of his big eyes. While the other birds were away, the Grass-Warbler performed a very cunning trick on the Owl and escaped. But this Owl did not discover until the late afternoon when the birds returned from the assembly with the verdict of "death by hanging" for the Grass-Warbler. The Owl went into the hole to bring out the condemned Grass-Warbler, but soon returned shame-faced to report that the Grass-Warbler had escaped. Thereupon, a large number of the more aggressive birds swarmed on him, pecking and scratching him. But the Owl fought back, keeping them at bay until he was able to slip back into the hole. Reminded cooly by their would-be victim that if they were bent on killing him they would have to come into the hole one at a time, the birds hesitated until sunset when they all felt drowsy and sought their homes. This gave the Owl a chance to come out of the hole and go hunting for food while the other birds slept. He returned to the hole long before the earliest risers were out, so that he might not be killed. And this is how he has been living ever since.

The fullest version I know of this tale is a Xhosa-language one in a school reader prepared by Rev. Candlish Koti and first published about 1951. But in December 1942, when the great news topic among the South African Bantu-speaking peoples was a bitter dispute over the succession to the paramount chieftainship of Qawukeni (Eastern Pondoland), I witnessed the birth of a far richer version of this tale at a beer gathering in my home village, Mbekothwana. While the beer pots passed round, the men were discussing the latest developments in the Qawukeni dispute. At a certain stage, one of the younger men made the remark that "if those eagles and vultures of Qawukeni are not careful, the grass-warbler will hop on their backs." Most of the men recognised the allusion immediately, but there were a few who did not see the joke at all, and so the story had to be told in full. It was this that occasioned the birth of what I consider the most entertaining version I have ever heard. There began the most spontaneous cooperation I have ever seen in tale-telling. No less than six of the audience went with the principal narrator. They began "fattening" the narrative with dialogue, mimicry, bird-calls, graphic descriptions of the Grass-Warbler's "stunts" when left alone in the sky, etc. What was most revealing was the attitude of the original narrator to all this. Far from feeling he was being interrupted, this man was the most delighted of all. He was obviously getting fresh ideas for future occasions of story-telling. It is worth mentioning that those who participated in the telling of this tale were all "school people" and therefore familiar with Koti's version. It was precisely because they knew how the story was going to end that they were able to judge where the "highlighting" should be. This gives an idea how "fuller" versions develop from shorter ones, and why we find so many versions of one and the same tale, some colourless, some mediocre, and a few very colourful. It also shows how trying it must be to informants to have to dictate narrative to collectors, especially if such collectors are not conversant with the language.

Intellectually and aesthetically, human tales are on a much higher plane than animal tales. It is the human tales that deal with the more serious aspects of life, and through them we get an insight into the ethos of a people: their conception of the meaning and worth of human life, their conception of good and evil, of the ideal husband or wife, of the ideal brother or sister, of the ideal parent, lover, social hero, community. Human tales cover the whole range of human experience, on the family as well as on the communal and inter-communal levels. We therefore find in them such motifs as parental and filial love, jealousies among co-wives, the authority of custom, youthful revolt against "tiresome and meaningless" custom, tyranny and benevolence, infanticide, genocide, greed and generosity, war and peace, hunger and abundance, ugliness and beauty. They are therefore capable of evoking all conceivable human emotions. They are taken very seriously, and, traditionally, they are told only after sundown, mostly by the oldest women, indoors or in the open air, with everyone in the audience seated and facing the narrator. One outstanding characteristic of these tales is the song, which is comparatively rare in animal tales. Almost every tale has one or more songs. This is not a mere interlude, but a development of the narrative. In tragic recognition, in reporting the unspeakable such as murder, in addressing a non-human or lifeless thing such as a monster or a river or the elements that the protagonist wants to influence one way or the other, the song is usually the medium. The melody is in general very simple, and so the audience finds it easy to catch it and join in the singing, especially in a tale where the song is a kind of ritual that constitutes dialogue between the protagonist and his or her non-human interlocutor more than once (usually three times) in the narrative.

Animals and fabulous monsters often play a prominent part in human tales. Doves come to the help of the sad, neglected wife who has become the laughingstock of her co-wives because she is unable to bear her husband children. Small animals such as the ant,the mouse and the frog become useful allies when the hero-lover must either prove his worth to his tyrannical prospective in-laws or die. Tiny birds report concealed murder, using song as medium. The commonest anti-human being is a species of ogre known as *zimu* (Xhosa-Zulu) or *dimo* (Sotho). The fabulous monsters have long, ominously descriptive names: *Sinyobolokondwane* "Slimy-Loathsome", *Siququmadevu* "Energetic-snouted," *Kholo-modumo* "Great-hubbub," *Makhanda-mahlanu* "Five-headed," *Silo-sinamaphundu* "Monster-with-nodules," and *Mangangezulu* "Mighty-as-the-heavens." Not all monsters are anti-human. There are some that would seem to be symbols of sacred custom and absolute morality. These are immortal, and they do not destroy human life. When a monster of this type appears, it is because some person of rank has violated custom by an action or actions that may destroy the community or human life itself. The punishment he imposes is usually severe and affects the whole community. But once he has done his duty, he vanishes. As a rule, he figures in a narrative in which the protagonist is a princess. Anti-human monsters are usually the swallowing type. They are challenged and slain by human heros, sometimes in time to bring out the swallowed person or persons alive.

The popular idea that these human tales are "children's tales" is erroneous. It is true that there are many tales about children for children, but even a tale about children may be for grown-ups. Neither in my opinion, is it correct to say that their function is to instruct. The primary function, as in all worthwhile art, is to entertain and illuminate.

One of the most popular tales about children is that of The Earth-bred Babies. According to this tale, there was an endless drought, and the people decided to drive their livestock and find their way back to EMBO, the beautiful legendary homeland whence their great-great grandfathers migrated. Among these people was a pregnant woman whose husband fell ill and died during the journey. In her condition, the woman could not travel as fast as the others, but the large favourite family ox, Phondo-lwandlovu "Elephant's tusk," kept an eye, over looking back and moo-ing to encourage her when she fell too far behind. At last she felt so tired that she entered a forest and lay down to rest in a wash-out gully, her only companion being the ox that would not leave her behind. There she gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. She left the twins under care of the ox and went to a village of strangers to seek help, but when she tried to lead them to the spot, she could not find it. After a long search, the helpers concluded that the ox and the twins must have been eaten by ogres, and they took the sad woman with them and nursed her until she was strong enough to be escorted to her people. But the babies were not dead, nor were they hungry. They ate earth and grew up. The ox looked very well after them and kept them happy by teaching them to ride on his back. One day, when they were strong enough to undertake a long journey, he knelt on his forelegs and they climbed on his back. Then he set out to follow their mother. As he travelled he moo-ed every now and then, whereupon the twins sang:

Moo, moo away, Phondo-lwandlovu!
We seek our mother, Phondo-lwandlovu,
She begat us and left us, Phondo-lwandlovu,
She left us in a gully, Phondo-lwandlovu,
We ate earth and grew up, Phondo-lwandlovu.

On and on they travelled, the ox moo-ing and the twins singing whenever they passed through a village. When at last they reached the beautiful new village where the mother and her people were, she was the first to hear the children's voices and the favourite ox.

This tale is very delightful when fully told and, as can be imagined, it is loved by young and old. But whom does it instruct? And what is the content of the instruction? It seems to me it would be stretching a point even for an S.P.C.A. enthusiast to suggest that it instructs children to be kind to animals because they can be very loyal!

The other extreme is the relentlessly realistic tale followed by such questions as: But what should he or she have done? What choice had he or she? Such a tale is The Woman and the Mighty Bird. According to this tale, during a long spell of cold, when firewood was very scarce, a beautiful young women stole away from the other wood-gatherers and ventured into a dark grove of tall trees in the depths of the forest where the women were constantly warned never to set foot. In the deep dark shadows she found a giant bird, black-feathered, red-beaked, red-throated, surrounded by countless bundles of good firewood. After a dialogue in which she solemnly promised that she would not tell her husband about his favours, the bird invited her to pick up any bundle she wanted and take it home. She kept her promise, telling her husband lies. Just before this bundle was finished, she stole away again. But before giving her wood, the bird puffed himself to a great size and thundered:

Woe to you if you've told those of Ndela
That you've ever seen the mighty bird
Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap!

In reply, the woman sang:

I have not said to those of Ndela
That I've ever seen the mighty bird
Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap.

This was repeated three times, and then, with the warning, the woman was invited to pick up a bundle and carry it home. The husband was more suspicious, but said nothing.

The woman went to the forest a third time, and after the bird's thunderous threat and her assuring reply in song, she was invited to take a bundle of wood.

But when she arrived home this time, her husband was determined to know the truth. He asked her the same question, and again she lied.

"But what are you asking me, my husband? I told you before that I found--"

"You told me, but you told me a lie. I want the truth!"

He stepped towards her, his long-bladed spear held high in his right hand. The women tried to run this way and that along the wall, but he caught up with her, pressed her to the wall with the blades of the spears in his left hand, and then lowered the spear in the right hand and held it close to her heart.

"Will you tell the truth or shall I kill you now? Where did you get this wood?"

"Wait! Don't kill me! O, don't kill me! I'll tell the truth!"

"Speak!"

"I got it from the depths."

"From the depths! Who gave it to you?"

"O! Mhm! O!"

"Speak!"

"It was given to me by . . . by . . . by . . . the mighty bird!"

No sooner had she uttered these words than the great trees moved from the depths of the forest, surrounded the entire homestead and cast their dark shadows over it. The great bird emerged from the shadows and made straight for the Great Hut. His eyes and beak and throat were a terrifyingly deep red, and as he approached, he grew bigger and bigger until, by the time he reached the doorway, he was many sizes bigger than the Great Hut itself. The man was so terrified that his spears dropped from his hands, and he fell senseless near the hearth. The woman crouched at the far end of the hut, clutching her chest with her right hand and shielding her face with her left, as if she was being blinded by the light of the big red eyes that glared at her from the doorway.

The great bird thundered:

"*Woe to you if you've said to those of Ndela*
That you've ever seen the mighty bird
Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap!"

The woman sang weakly, a little out of tune:

"*I have not said to those of Ndela*
That I've ever seen the mighty bird
Of mani---"

The great bird interrupted her, thundering more fiercely:

"*Woe to you if you've said to those of Ndela*
That you've ever seen the mighty bird
Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap!"

The woman sang more weakly, and much more out of tune:

"*I have not said to those of Ndela*
That I I've ever seen the--"

Again the great bird interrupted her, thundering still more fiercely:

"*Woe to you if you've said to those of Ndela*
That you've ever seen the mighty bird
Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap!"

The woman sang very weakly, completely out of tune:

"*I have not said to*--"

Like lightning the great bird stretched out his long red neck right over the prostrate man, opened his great red mouth very wide and--gulp!--he swallowed the woman alive. Then, turning sharply about, he vanished in the grove, and the great trees and their dark shadows receded to the depths of the forest.

The last scene has been transcribed directly from my translation of the original Xhosa version. In the major portion of the narrative, of which only a summary is given here, remarkably subtle artistry is employed to enable the listener to follow the woman with his mind's eye as she goes deeper and deeper into the sea of divided loyalty until she finds herself in the Scylla-and-Charybdis situation of the last scene. The woman is described as beautiful. She is the youngest of the women who go gathering firewood. The forbidden grove is described as "the grove of trees that hid the sun, making day look like night." When the women reached the grove, "she paused and looked around, her heart beating wild." It was "deep in the dark shadows" that the Mighty Bird was waiting for her. All the descriptions of the bird and his actions lay emphasis on his masculinity. His eyes were "as big as a man's head" his neck "many sizes that of a great bull" and he himself was "a giant bird on whose red throat was fold upon fold of flesh that hung loosely like the dewlap of a giant bull." About their first meeting, it is related that "as she drew nearer and nearer, the bird puffed himself until he was many times his former size, and his eyes and beak and throat became a deeper and deeper red." On this occasion, she was rather afraid to go very near him, nor did she do this until, "in a deep voice," he invited her to "come closer." In the ritual dialogue, he is "the mighty bird of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap."

Side by side with this goes the emphasis on the femininity of the woman and the growing intimacy between her and the bird. Each time before booming his piece in the ritual dialogue, the bird "puffed himself to a greater size." On the first occasion, the woman in reply "sang sweetly but sadly," and when she was invited to "pick up any bundle you like and carry it home," "she picked up a bundle of firewood, put it on her head and went home." On the second occasion, "he beckoned her, and she came up to him. As soon as she was close enough, he puffed himself and boomed." In her reply, "the woman sang sweetly and reassuringly." After the dialogue, "the bird deflated and calmed himself." This time the woman, on being invited to pick up a bundle of wood, "cast her eye over the bundles, taking her own time, and then picked up a much bigger one than before." On the third occasion, "she went close up to him without waiting to be asked." Then, when he boomed three times, . . . , each time more menacingly than before, she sang sweetly, . . . , each time more brightly and reassuringly than before." After the dialogue, she did not wait to be invited to pick up a bundle, but "picked up the best bundle next to the one on which the bird was brooding." (Earlier in the narrative it was mentioned that the women always found the bird sitting on the biggest bundle of all "as if he had never moved since she last came." This now is a hint that if there should be a fourth occasion, she will demand as of right the bundle on which she always finds him sitting.)

It is very significant that of all the people in the community, the person who the bird is really anxious should never know of these meetings is the husband. On the first meeting, the dialogue that ended in the fatal bond went as follows:

"Now, if I give you a bundle of wood to carry home, do you promise never to tell anybody?"

"I promise."

"You will not tell the other women?"

"I promise."

"Your husband?"

"I'll never tell him."

First, "anybody," then, "the other women" and last, "your husband." But thereafter, the warning is always about the husband. On each of the three occasions, the bird's last words as the woman carries away her bundle are: "Remember! You are not to tell your husband!" The "Ndela" of the ritual dialogue is the husband's family name, and in this context "those of Ndela" refers to the husband, or to "him whose name we had better not mention directly."

The husband's suspicion grows in the background in proportion to the growing intimacy between the woman and the bird. On the first occasion, after the woman has told him that she got the wood "somewhere--not very far from the place where we gather wood," his question is, "Where are the other women now?" After she has told him they are still in the forest, "the husband says no more; but he followed the woman with his eyes as she moved about the home preparing the evening meal." On the second occasion, after she had given "the same explanation as before" he said no more, but looked more troubled than ever." On the third occasion, when she found him armed with a pile of spears, he made it quite obvious that he had been suspicious from the beginning:

"Woman! Twice you have told me lies. This time you're going to tell me the truth or I'm going to stab you to death. Where do you alone get this wood?"

After listening to this narrative, many questions arise in the minds of the audience: Why were the women never to set foot in the depths of the forest? Did the men know about the existence of the Mighty Bird? Who and what was the Mighty Bird? What was the relationship between him and this community? What was the relationship between him and the woman? Did the wronged husband recover? It is one of the highest artistic touches of this tale that these questions are left to those listening to answer--if they can.

To give some idea how a tale of this kind is told, I return to the last scene. To be fully appreciated, this terrible scene is to be heard and seen, because the written word cannot replace the teller of spoken narrative. It cannot imitate the agitated voice of the wronged husband, the screams of the terrified woman, the thunderous voice of the power-conscious bird. It cannot imitate the terrified expression in the woman's face as she feels the pricks of the spears that press her to the wall, and the sight of the long-bladed glittering one that her husband lowers and holds close to her heart. It cannot imitate her shielding her eyes from the glare of the bird's blazing eyes. cannot imiate the woman "singing weakly, and out of tune." But the teller of spoken narrative makes the audience hear and see all these things, because she plays the role of each character in turn, before her audience. She does not have to say in words that the bird "thundered fiercely," "more fiercely" "still more fiercely." She does the thundering herself, and the audience can see and hear that the second thunder is more fierce than the first, and the third than the second. She does not have to tell her audience that "the great bird interrupted her." Instead, she breaks off the woman's weak song of denial and thunders the bird's accusation. The song of denial has been heard so many times as the narrative has developed that the audience know the tune, and they know how it was rendered in earlier scenes. So it is not necessary for the teller to say in words that "the woman sang weakly, a little out of tune" etc. She sings weakly and out of tune, and her audience sees the difference. This makes the last dialogue between the woman and the bird very effective in its terror. The enraged bird's voice becomes more thunderous each time, and his accusation is given in full. In contrast, the twice-guilty-conscious woman's voice becomes weaker each time, and her singing is out of tune, her hopeless denial more incomplete. In its effectiveness, the last and shortest singing is comparable to the weakening voice of Rigoletto's daughter silenced by death before she sings the last note of her pleading song.

Discussion

Jordan: Before we begin discussion, let me add that in most African languages, there is a distinction between legends, which recall actual events, and tales, which people make up; however, there is no word for "myth." Also let me emphasize that the version of a story which is told depends upon the audience. Implicit in the process of reducing any story to writing is the danger that situational and personal variants may be ignored. Indigenous stories may falsely be labelled "degenerate myths" and ascribed to borrowing, if sufficient comparisons of stories with similar themes are not made. Also, written stories may seem dull because they do not include the continual response of the audience, which is a necessary part of the setting.

Alexandre: Does the audience participation reflect social and legal systems, and second, does the audience already know the contents of the tales? Sometimes the audience corrections control the perpetuation of a story in just one form.

Jordan: Children, of course, are corrected if they tell a tale incorrectly. And to an adult speaker a listener may remark, "Once I heard it this way. . ." But extensive correction is probably a function of a formal eliciting situation in which participants are anxious to be correct.

Alexandre: Do the audiences participate in singing?

Jordan: Yes, they do. It is, by the way, important to have women collectors in the field to get the female versions of tales and songs.

Bascom: It is interesting to note the cross-societal and cross-genre variation in amounts of audience correction in American Indian story telling.

Messinger: The Ibibio fine their story tellers for making errors.

Alexandre: Is there competition in telling the same tales?

Jordan: Children compete in this way when they are learning to tell stories.

Snyder: Are there tales with multiple endings?

Jordan: Yes, there are.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL NON-PROSE FORMS:RECITING, DECLAIMING, SINGING AND STROPHIC STRUCTURE

Gilbert Rouget

The subject which I have been asked to treat, *African traditional non-prose forms*, raises the whole problem of poetics and, at the same time, suggests a vast program of research. I have found it necessary to restrict it in two ways. The word "non-prose" questions the very existence of objective criteria for a clear distinction between what is and what is not prose. Opinions are far from unanimous on this point, yet to avoid vagueness I have had to make a choice. The one I have made will enable us to keep the discussion both on a highly abstract level and in purely linguistic terms. As to the subject itself, I have considered only one aspect, that of the relations between certain forms of text and certain ways of using the voice. Hence my subtitle. If this view is acceptable, it must also be remembered that, in Africa as anywhere else, no inventory of traditional poetic compositions can be made without referring to music in a way I will try to describe later on.

Let us add that "traditional" has arbitrarily been understood to mean "of purely oral tradition," and would exclude, for instance, the Fulani poems of Adamawa, recently published by P. F. Lacroix, not so much because they are in written form, but because they are more or less influenced by "Arab" poetry, and are thus indirectly but perhaps more deeply marked by writing. Finally "African" has been restricted to the meaning "of black Africa."

Restricted for the sake of our discussion to its essential points, Roman Jakobson's essay "Linguistics and Poetics" (1960) can be considered as dealing with poetics on two different levels: that of poetic language, shared by prose and poetry, and that of the versemaking systems which are peculiar to the latter.

The first level will provide us with a framework to discuss the problem of relations between prose and poetry; we shall thus be able to define what we mean by "poetry," "prose" and "non-prose." On the second one, I will try to show that although African oral literature offers examples of "non-prose forms" having the general characters of a versemaking system, yet to describe their peculiarities, the addition of new features to R. Jakobson's list--a list which he does not himself consider exhaustive--would be needed.

Inserted in a general conception of the functions of the language[1] (1960:353) the "poetic function," compared to the others, is presented as: "The set (*Einstellung*) towards the message as such focus, on the message for its own sake," but, (and this is important) "although we distinguish six basic aspects of language, we could, however, hardly find verbal messages that would fulfill only one function."

On the other hand, to specify "what is the indispensable feature inherent in any piece of poetry," Jakobson, after reminding us that: ". . . the two basic modes of arrangements used in verbal behaviour [are] selection and combination,"[2] concludes: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination." Thus any poetical work is necessarily a message in lines or in prose which fulfills both this condition and the previous one--that of being, at least partly, focused "on the message for its own sake." The difference between the two genres lies in the fact that the composition in prose, the "verseless composition" (op.cit.: 374), less constantly uses the projection of equivalences "from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" and does not show any "dominant figure of sound," this being the exclusive feature of poetry. The essential question of knowing at what level this feature appears will be discussed later.

Finally, Jakobson considers any "verseless" poetic message as prose, in the wide sense just described, embracing, among other things, what might be called "applied" poetic prose, by analogy with several types of poetry whose common character is the use of what he calls "applied" verse (op. cit.: 359). So, as soon as one enters the domain of poetic language--oral or written--the only alternative is between poetry and prose. Poetic prose and poems in prose are not a problem; they are only particular--and extremely frequent--cases of these two general categories. For us, "non-prose" will therefore be equivalent to "poetry."

Leaving the level of poetic language, where African spoken art apparently does not show essential peculiarities, let us now deal with the second level, where versemaking systems give birth to poetic forms, to "non-prose forms." ". . . apparently", writes R. Jakobson (op. cit.: 359) "no human culture ignores versemaking. . ." It would appear that Africa, at least, if no other region, is an exception. If again we discard all compositions that are written or "tainted" by writing, no African text, as far as we know, has been collected, that might strictly speaking be called poetry, i.e., ruled by one of the versemaking systems (syllabic, accentual, quantitative, tonematic[3]) mentioned by R. Jakobson. Might Africa then completely lack "non-prose forms," i.e., poetry? The answer is no: countless texts have been collected which fulfill the double condition of being composed in poetic language and of making constant use of "reiterative figures of sound." To describe them, we shall have to move progressively from spoken to sung discourse.

The second part of this paper will be devoted to this task, with the help of concrete examples. On the whole, if I had to sum up my purpose in one single sentence, I would merely refer to J. Berry's Spoken Art in West Africa (1961: 4-5). I have simply taken up again some of his points and have discussed them at somewhat greater length than he did.

David Arnott (1957: 393) has drawn attention to the existence of chain-rhymes among the Fulani. This widely spread genre is obviously to be considered as a composition essentially based on a "reiterative sound figure," this figure being the word which ends the first utterance and is picked up again--so often with the sort of equivalence and ambiquities that have already been mentioned--to become the beginning of the second one. Commenting on the two texts quoted, Arnott adds (op. cit.: 395):

> A prominent feature of both examples is the very marked regularity of rhythm, which justifies their being treated as verse rather than prose.

A glance at his examples is indeed enough to convince one of the correctness of this view. We will, however, come back to this point later on.

The Dogon texts recited in secret language (*Sigi So*) show a poetical process completely different from the preceding. Long fragments have been published by Michel Leiris, preceded by an introduction and followed by an essay on the grammar and a vocabulary. His own is perhaps the best description of this poetic system (pages 44-45):

> "Considered in its general structure, a text in the *Sigi* language is a series of simple or complex sentences, always rather short (but of variable dimension). Each sentence corresponds to one inhaling of air in the lungs of the speaker who accelerates his delivery if the sentence is longer, in order to pronounce it in one breath. Each sentence thus forms a kind of verse, a whole in itself from the phonic as well as from the semantic point of view--a respiratory group corresponding to a unity of meaning. Whether the verse, thus defined, consists of one phrase only or of several ones, in both cases, with a few exceptions, its end is marked by a particular termination: the syllable *boy*, which is a sort of unique rhyme uttered on a lower and duller tone than the rest of the verse. According to the saying of some natives, *boy* would not be a word having a distinct meaning. The syllable *boy*, void of any particular lexicological value could represent a simple sound element added at the end of each verse for the sake of musicality and rhythm, and perhaps as well in order to mark the end of a phrase or of a group of phrases, as a kind of punctuation sign, or even as those terms that Granet found in the ancient Chinese poetry and called 'oral punctuation.' (Granet, *La Pensee Chinoise*, p. 75.) A similar rhythmic process is currently used in the poetic texts(particularly in songs) of the common Dogon, where such particles are often added here and there for the sake of measure, without any apparent reason. Moreover, the Mandinka dialects often use the suffix *O* or *wo*, or also *ye*, in order to mark a pause at the end of a sentence or of a period."

Moreover, these texts in the *Sigi* language show a great number of sequences whose form derives from a process which will be dealt with later in relation to the Rwanda texts of the "Way of enthronement," namely a setting which might be called provisionally enumerative and partly recurrent.

All this justifies our considering these texts as truly composing a poetical genre. In the present context, we will particularly select two characteristics belonging to the list of prosodic features which we consider a useful addition to the ones mentioned by R. Jakobson as susceptible of use for poetical aims: first, the particle *boy*, which, as written by M. Leiris, actually functions as a rhyme, but for much longer unities than the ones traditionally named "line," and secondly, the way of reciting with a particularly swift delivery which brings into play what he calls a "respiratory group." Having personally recorded some fragments of *Sigi So* (in the present case, the dialogue of a Sigi man with a dove), I will add that these texts are delivered with a kind of intonation difficult to describe, but definitely different from normal speech.

In Rwanda, three great "poetical genres" have been described: the dynastic poems, the pastoral ones and the poems of war. All are not equally represented in the existing publications.

The dynastic poems, treated in A. Kagame's work (1951: 13) are divided into three kinds. The first two categories have this in common, that they consist of sets of "different paragraphs. . . . separated by a refrain" regularly taken up again at each beginning. The third, however, does not show this form of division and is said in one "stroke." The author does not give any details as to the performance of these poems:. he does not indicate whether they are recited or declaimed in a particular tone, or whether they are sung. He gives, however, details on the "figures of dynastic style." At the rhetorical level, these are the poetic processes characteristic of the style: allusive mode, constant use of "synonymous, homonymous and metonymous figures," finally, abundant use of praise terms which he terms "paddings proper to the dynastic style." He divides these "paddings" into two categories: the "general paddings" appropriate to any king, and the "particular paddings," appropriate to one single king. These stylistic features are enough to show that the "dynastic poems" are not "ordinary prose." Still, if a poetic system exists, its principles have not yet been set out.

Partly correcting what he had written in a former note (1958: 69), A. Coupez (1962: 8) no longer uses the word "line," and writes of this dynastic poetry that:

> "It is characterised by a free rhythm based only on the systematic repetition of sounds (segmental phonemes, tonality, quantity), words or formula, but sufficiently marked to divide the text into verses."

As to J. Vansina (1958: 86) he gives the following highly interesting details:

> "The dynastic poems . . . are generally recited in two ways. They can either be sung, or recited whilst observing certain inflexions superimposed on the normal intonation of the sentence. . . ."

He adds other remarks, of no less interest to which I shall revert later.

If, as is probable, the piece recorded by R. Barbaglia (Side II, track 6), is indeed a dynastic poem, this genre could as well be performed with the accompaniment of a beaten string bow, and would be made up of long recited sequences divided by refrains, which are sung and introduced by an instrumental ritornelle.[4] We are thus confronted with a mixture of recitation and music. Let us momentarily drop this and ask on what criteria Abbot Kagame based his division of these texts into lines. Apparently there are none.

Concerning the "poems of war," A. Coupez and Th. Kamanzi (1962: 8-9) state that:

> "They apply to the same process as the former (--the dynastic one--), but only sporadically and with less insistence, in such

> a way that the text does not offer rhythmic subdivisions. If they differ from the prose it is particularly by their style, which shares certain characteristics with the other poetical forms and still has one of his own."

These poems of war consist either in "autopanegyrics" or in accounts of "gallant deeds." They are spoken in a particular manner, their delivery extremely fast, their rhythm frenzied, "the reciting person striving to utter the greatest number of words possible in the space of one breath without even respecting the normal delimitation of sentences " (*loc. cit.*). R. Barbaglia gives an example of this kind called--*iivugo*[5] in his record (side II, track 9).

These texts, declaimed in one "stroke" and without musical accompaniment and so performed in quite a different way from the dynastic poems, would seem then to belong to the category of poems in prose: they probably differ from "conversational" (T. A. Sebeok, 1960: 222) prose in a certain number of stylistic features--in short, use of poetic language--but they would not seem to offer any other system of "reiterative sound figures" than the already mentioned "respiratory group." Unless this feature is accepted as a prosodic basis for a versemaking system--we will come back to this point--they are not "poetry." Since, up to the present time, no text of this kind has been published so far as I know, I will no longer speak of them.

The pastoral poetry (A. Coupez, 1962:8) "is organized in short lines whose steady measure is based on the mora." A former article (1957: 58-60) gives an idea of the system. A. Coupez and Th. Kamanzi write that "the rhythm is based on the oppositions of vocalic quantity which have in the language a phonemic value. . . ." The authors do not give any details as to the way of speaking these poems; they only indicate that they are "recited." No text is reproduced; nonetheless their analysis shows that we are here confronted with "poetry" in the classic sense of the word, for the setting relies exclusively on prosodic features of phonological order (number and place of the mora) and the texts are spoken not sung. However, we should like to know if these "recitations" are made in a normal voice or if, on the contrary, they require any particular intonation, especially since, in a short note published two years later, A. Coupez (1951: 61) shows that three Rundi lullabies are based on this very "quantitative rhythm" and expressly states that these lullabies are sung.[6]

Let us now consider the texts published by M. d'Hertefelt and A. Coupez in *The Sacred Kingship of the Ancient Ruanda*. These texts detailing the essential rites of the Rwanda kingship, known to the *abiiru* only (ritualists of the Rwanda kings), are set out in this work under the form of lines. The authors justify this (p. 12) by noting that:

> "The manuscript [on which they have worked] sets the texts into short lines, with an initial capital letter as if it were verse. There is however no rhythmical element conferring on them any formal autonomy. Their delimitation is a syntactical one: each of them comprises a group of words . . . , but the extension of these groups varies perceptibly from one passage to the other . . . . Nevertheless we have respected this setting, for it may correspond to a particular character of the recitation: the lines of certain rwanda poetical forms (pastoral poetry, dynastic poetry) are in

fact marked by a pause or by a decrease of speed in the delivery at the last syllable."

Considering these texts from the point of view of the structural analysis, we see that three different categories of statements are involved. If, for instance, in the longest of these texts, "The Way of the Enthronement," which contains 1,249 lines, we examine the episode beginning at line 496 and ending at line 614, we note:

(1) Narratives relating the consequences of actions undertaken by the protagonists of the ritual (line 496 to 553): These narratives have not apparently been set in any form. There is no reason therefore not to consider them as poetry.

(2) As if inserted in these narratives, statements which are characterized by the recurrence of the major part of the text which is repeated several times with variations on one word, generally a noun: These enumerations (line 516 to 521) form a verse which is repeated immediately after (line 521 to 526). They may be grouped in series, thus showing a setting so distinct that we may speak of poetry: the "equivalences" which are projected on the "axis of selection," are complementarily given by the recurrent sentence and by the word which acts always at the same place as a variant. Although we find a "referential" function as was the case with the parts of mere narrative, here the focus is on the message "for its own sake" and there are "reiterative figures of sound."

(3) Long passages generally inserted between quotation marks, which are quoted speech.[7] Once again, their setting is well marked (line 553 to 614). Here, not enumerations but wishes are formulated, yet the process is the same: the major part of the sentence is repeated several times with a variant only on the addressee or on the subject of the wish, these wishes themselves being grouped in successive series. The main difference between this and the two former categories of statements is the fact that here we are no longer dealing with the referential but with the conative function, the focus still remaining on "the message for its own sake."

The authors working from a manuscript obviously could not examine whether these three types of statements were subject to three different types of recitation. I am inclined to believe that it is so, from analogy with what is offered in other genre to which we refer elsewhere in this paper.

In Dahomey, at the king of Porto Novo's court I have recorded texts which might be called "rushed recitations." These pieces, unevenly long, are recited by the king's personal herald when the sovereign leaves the private quarters of his palace to show himself in public. They are made up of a series of phrases--mostly praise-names--all starting by *édɔ*[8] "he says," the beginning of each strophe being marked by the words *Alada xɔlu* (King of Alada), and the end in an "envoi," each time different, but whose function is to sum up in a laconic way, and as a wish, the general meaning of the strophe that has just been said. Some other features can be added to this pattern, particularly the insertion of a stereotyped apostrophe, the most frequent being:

"man of hate, woman of hate,
"caster of spells, giver of illness"

followed by a curse, thus composing a sort of internal refrain. These texts are always recited, or rather shouted, as loudly and as swiftly as possible, rushing the words and the phrases together in such a way that one would never suspect that they obey the rules of the formal sophisticated composition which a careful transcription easily shows.

This sort of recitation "in one stroke," already mentioned by M. Leiris, to which A. Kagame refers when dealing with the third type of dynastic poems--often "autopanegyric" poems that could doubtless be classified in the extensive category of praise names, thus relating them to our Porto-Novo texts --is probably widely spread all over Black Africa. Could it not constitute the constant and particularly remarkable feature of a specific poetic genre? Other observations, too long to relate here, would incline me to believe so. Anyhow, it is a "verbal behaviour" that can be observed elsewhere. To mention an example outside Africa, this is the way Canaques behave when delivering their famous pilou speeches. The fragment published on a record by M. Leenhardt is clear evidence of it.

Of a completely different order, since uttered on a monochord tone approaching indifference--somewhat in the spirit of the prayer-mill--a text recorded in Dahomey among Yoruba, and recently published by the present writer (1965: 88), shows that in Africa the recitation of a "poetic" or at any rate "semi-poetic" speech can take many different forms. We are referring here to a prayer addressed, at the beginning of a ceremony, to Shango, god of lightning, patron of the community. Delivered in neither slow nor swift tempo, without any particular intensity, in a very even manner, each sentence uttered by the celebrant is taken up in chorus by the audience. The general tone would be, more or less, that of a school class repeating without much conviction the lesson of its teacher. The formal criteria followed for the setting out of this text have been sufficiently explained and there is no point in repeating them here. Let us merely say that they are mainly the unity of meaning and "recurrence." They allow us to see how this suite of verses is composed: each of them expresses a wish--either positive or negative--which is repeated a variable number of times, changing at each repetition, either the object of the wish or its addressee.

This responsory recitation gives way to declamations delivered by the chorus in a completely different voice providing a sort of conclusion to what has preceded. It is certainly no accident that, following this dull reciting, the declamation bursts suddenly out into truly lyrical tones, confronting us with a remarkable case of Sprechgesang.

Scanned declamations of a very similar, if not identical, kind can be heard at the King of Porto-Novo's court.[9] They are suites of verses performed in unison by the King's wives. They always finish in a long-held vowel itself ending on a decrescendo which is obviously concerted. The texts of these scanned declamations--considering their meaning it would be more appropriate to call them "acclamations"--are made of praise names referring to the present king or to one of his predecessors. The verses follow one another, forming more or less long suites, and always begin with a certain formula starting with a particular apostrophe not referring to the King's person but to the king as such. This kind of declamation is not peculiar to Africa. It could be compared, for instance, with what can be heard in Roumania, an example of which is to be found on the record published by C. Brailoiu (Scene nuptiale).

We ought here to examine the many varieties of vocal emission ranging from stricly spoken utterances to fully sung melodies, through a wide set of intermediate degrees which could be gathered, for the sake of simplicity, under the general term of Sprechgesang.[10] It would be equally useful to deal with psalmody, cantillation, recitatives of many kinds. But this would take us too far away from our limits and we will have to restrict outselves to a few remarks on singing in its relation with strophic structure.

Nursery rhymes, widely spread in Africa,[11] present, in our view, the most interesting peculiarity of being sometimes "intoned," sometimes really sung, thus establishing a sort of bridge between recitation and singing. C. Brailoiu (1954-a) has shown their universal character, which is mainly due to rhythmic pattern and this is the aspect he has particularly studied. Leaving aside the use they make of a poetic language of their own, let us merely say that this rhythmic pattern--"reiterative sound figure" par excellence--is frequently found co-existing with a classic verse-making system and a strophic structure.

As a matter of fact, the text of a large number of African "songs," when transcribed carefully and completely in such a way that all recurrences clearly appear, turn out to be organized according to complex strophic structures. Such is the case for a ritual Gun song of southern Dahomey (G. Rouget, 1961: 77), whose first part--a strophe twice repeated with a slight difference --is sung and the last one recited, a chromatic bridge making the link between the two. A piece of liturgic singing, recorded also in southern Dahomey but this time among Yoruba-speaking peoples, shows a suite of strophes (G. Rouget, 1965: 94-101). All of them follow rather similar patterns, with the exception of the first one, which is completely different and uses melodic features of its own. A liturgic praise song (oriki Sango) from the same place displays a strophic structure which is again different and because of the subtlety of the assymetries at work within a fairly symetric frame, is the most complex of all those I have so far had an opportunity to deal with. Its highly sophisticated composition is clearly evidenced in the transcription of both the text and its translation (op. cit.: 102). Regular alternations of recitativo and aria style of singing occur. Representing two complementary parts of the strophe, they are correlated with two different kinds of "speech acts" (Cl. Laloum and G. Rouget: 135) and follow two different types of formal organization, each one characterized, among other features, by a specific sort of ornament (staccato/legato) which could be considered as playing the role of a "reiterative sound figure."

In Guinea, certain historical songs of the Malinke griots' repertoire use a somewhat similar kind of alternation. The difference lies in the fact that sequences of both styles are much longer and the contrast between them much more marked. Usually the periods of recitativo secco--the harp-lute providing a continuous instrumental accompaniment--are longer than those sung in a full voice and in the style of an aria (playing apparently the role of a refrain and often executed in chorus), with the addition of other instruments such as iron scrapers. In Senegal I have recorded Fulani griots of the Walo whose repertoire, as far as formal features are concerned, was very similar. Unfortunately, texts were not established in any of these cases and I could not say what relationship of meaning connects the text of the *recitativo* with that of the aria. They most probably belong to the type of repertoire mentioned by J. Berry (1960:5) quoting D. Arnott and thus would be "verse sequences" whose main function is that of "aiding the memorizing of genealogies and historic events."

Let us now go back to Rwanda. One of the pieces recorded by R. Barbaglia and already referred to (Side II, spiral 6), shows that the singer regularly alternates more or less long periods ("paragraphs," as A. Kagame writes) of very swift recitation, *parlando* but often nearly *recitativo* or even *arioso* with shorter periods really sung and in the form of a refrain. When we dealt previously with that recording, it was assumed to be a fragment of a "dynastic poem." Speaking of that genre, J. Vansina (1958: 86) throws an unexpected light on the problem of the relations between music and text. He writes:

> "The technique of learning these *ibingo* is rather special. The pupils begin by learning the melody of the song with other words and afterwards study the text of the poem, on the melody they already know. The final stage of apprenticeship consists in accompanying the teacher during the recitation.

This brings us to the final point of our paper. In point of fact, J. Vansina's statement agrees essentially with what A. B. Lord writes about the training of the "singer of tales:"

> "The second stage [of the training] begins when the singer opens his mouth, either with or without instrumental accompaniment. It begins with establishing the primary element of the form--the rhythm and melody . . . . *This is to be the framework for the expression of his ideas*. (Italics are mine.)

This framework--rhythm and melody--represents, in our view, a "systeme autonome," as C. Brailoiu says when speaking of the "rythme enfantin" (1956: 64), among many other poetic systems, including the pattern of an alexandrine or an octosyllable, and including perhaps also the "breath group" and the "rime unique" described by M. Leiris, the beginning rhyme of the king of Porto-Novo's herald, and what we might call the "pivot rhyme" of the Fulani chain-rhymes.

Moreover, as has been seen in the preceding pages, we have had to deal frequently with series of sentences forming a strophe (or a verse?)[12] characterized by the recurrence of the major part of the text, which is repeated several times with variations on one word, generally a noun. D. Arnott (*op. cit.*: 389) describes this "stylistic device" as "parallel phrasing (repetition of a basic phrase with variation for key words)." They could in the end be considered as resulting from a partial versification, operating on one part only of the line, most frequently the end (but not always), and thus using the principle of equivalence so often referred to, generally syllable for syllable or accentual scheme for accentual scheme, a "device" quite close to the classic rhyme.

The question is whether it is legitimate to consider all of them as belonging to a unique process. On the ground that classical versemaking makes use of phonological features only (accent, length, tone, syllable--all belonging to the prosodic domain of phonemics), the answer is most likely to be no, the generally accepted view being that expressed by T. A. Sebeok (1960:221):

> "A folksong (like any other song), viewed as a message, possesses the characteristic property of multiple generation: its performance constitutes a concurrently ordered selection from two sets of acoustic signals--in brief, codes--language and music, . . ."

Cheremis folksongs share with a large part of European folksongs the pecularity of being sung--as all songs--and versified at the same time.

From ~~an~~ earlier article by the same author (1956: 430), designed to show how the rules governing the versification system are derived when the entire corpus of several thousands of Cheremis folksong texts is analyzed ". . .one can conclude that there does not exist any spoken Cheremis piece of poetry." Songs may be always versified; there is no versifying without song. The situation is radically different from what it is in cultures having a writing system and a written poetry. Written down--by way of transcription, not of creation, needless to say--a Cheremis "sonnet" or a Yoruba oriki nonetheless appears (like a written composition) to be a text having a form of its own and whose existence may well be considered independently from the music. Indeed, music would not seem indispensable. But it must be kept in mind that both this "sonnet" and this "oriki", transcribed according to similar methods, are purely artificial pieces of work, though unquestionably justified from the point of view of a scientific approach.

The essentially global character of folksong composition or performance described by A. B. Lord or C. Brailoiu (1954-8)[13] raises the question whether indeed one has the right to consider it as a "combined manifestation of two forms of art, verbal and musical" (T.A. Sebeok, 1956:430), except of course for the sake of analysis.

Songs, types of recitation, ways of declaiming, rhythmic patterns of different kinds could perhaps be considered as "suprasegmental" prosodic features operating on larger units than does, for instance, accent on the syllable. But this is another problem.

Footnotes

[1] It should be remembered that R. Jakobson considers "the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication" as forming the following system:

Context
Addresser .... Message .... Addressee
Contact
Code

"Each of these six factors determine a different function of language. . . ." All together, they are organized according to the following scheme (*op. cit.*: 357)

Referential
Emotive Poetic Conative
Phatic
Metalingual

in such a way that each function of this scheme is defined as being "focused" on the corresponding factor of the other: the "emotive" on the "addresser," the "conative" on the "addressee," and so on.

[2] "The selection is produced on the base of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and antonymity, while the combination, the build up of the sequence, is based on contiguity."

[3] In Africa, the existence of a poetic process based on sequences of tones has been described among the Ibo and perhaps also among the Yoruba (Cf. G. Rouget, 1965:92, note). However, they cannot be considered as really giving birth to versified compositions.

In New Caledonia, A. Haudricourt (personal communication) has recently discovered a poetic system based on regular series of alternate tones. This is all the more interesting since it concerns texts which are not sung but *spoken*.

[4] R. Gunther (1964:119) classifies this piece among the Hutu music because of its accompaniment by a musical bow, this instrument being played by the Hutu only.

[5] The notes of the jacket say: "The *ibyivugo* are declamations which the vassals present to their *shebuja* . . . ." R. Gunther, (1964:121) classifies this piece among the Tussi music.

[6] The same question applies to the article by E. Bolaert (1952) on the structure of five Loukundo poems. Nothing is said as to the way they are recited; it is only specified that two of them are related to children's games (*op. cit.*, page 351, notes 1 and 4). This we would appear to be dealing here with children's rhymes and consequently once again with a particular type of recitation. We shall go into the matter later.

[7] R. Jakobson (1960: 371): "Virtually any poetic message is a quasi-quoted discourse, with all those peculiar intricate problems which 'speech within speech' offers to the linguist."

[8] A long Yoruba text, recently published by P. Verger, shows the same peculiarity, apart from the fact that "he says" does not seem to assume exactly the same functions. At first sight, these words should define unities of another kind.

[9] They have been published on a record (M.C. 20.146, Side I, Second part of spiral I) but without any text. A long study on the music of the royal palace of Porto-Novo is at present in progress.

[10] Quite a few examples from different regions have been published, particularly from West Africa, by Ch. Beart (1955). I have personally recorded some pieces among Wolof and Malinke.

[11] "Type d'emission vocale" which has not been "employe pour la premiere fois par Schonberg dans son Pierrot Lunaire" despite what one can read in the Encyclopedie de la Musique, (Fasquelle, 1960). Its existence certainly goes back to very remote times. (Cf. G. Rouget, 1961.)

[12] I have been using here the term "strophe" to avoid a problem of terminology which ought to be raised. Gun funeral songs, for instance, are made up of a very few sentences, sometimes just one, and very short, but the way this sentence is repeated--partially or entirely--and varied, is at least as important as the sentence itself, repetition and variation being "strict" and leaving no room at all for improvisation. Since a song is generally sung twice, one can observe that on the second time the pattern exactly reproduces what it was on the first. Would this song be called a strophe despite the fact that the repetition has not brought any renewal of the content? The definition given by Z. Kodaly and quoted by J. Ederly in a recent work (1965:3) is:

> "The strophe (or stanza) is the aggregate of lines, or motives, the largest unit of the study."

One can see how unsatisfactory it is.

Poems such as those published by E. de Dampierre for instance, evidently raise the problem of musical forms which cannot be treated with such a dubious terminology.

[13] Adjusted to one another (poetry and music) they form in the mind of the illiterates such an indivisible unity that they sometimes refuse to dictate the poems of their songs. As for the villagers who know how to write, they spread the lines one after the other across the whole width of the paper, like phrases of prose (. . .). They hardly conceive the lines themselves as distinct unities, in fact they simply call them "words" (vorbe) and for instance, to indicate the position of the refrain, they will say: la toata vorba (after each line). Accuracy is indeed exceptional: most of them, while dictating, deliberately omit, not only the refrains, but also all the repetitions of words, so that it is often impossible to restore the true form of what they are telling you.

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VERNACULAR LITERATURE IN AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Lyndon Harries

The consideration of the use of vernacular literature in African language teaching must initially raise the question of academic standards. Undergraduates doing a single year's course may not get very far in their approach to a vernacular literature. It is possible to choose the simpler folk-tales as texts for intermediate students. Much depends upon the nature of the language concerned. African vernacular literature does not easily lend itself to a system of graded texts. The grading even of folk-tales of any given language may be quite arbitrary, so that subsequent work becomes an extension of linguistic activity on much the same level. There is, however, considerable difference in linguistic and literary content as between the folk-tales of different African peoples. For example, the folk-literature of the lacustrine peoples of Central Africa is usually much more sophisticated, in the Western sense, more complex than that of many African peoples, say, in Tanzania. Comparative grading of linguistic form and content is certainly possible as between the folk-literatures of different peoples, though little has been attempted in this respect, but within any given language the linguistic standard is usually on much the same level.

This level varies according to the language. The lesser known languages are often more complex and difficult, but the difficulties may not all be linguistic ones. Some of the difficulties may lie in the proper interpretation of obscure references to tribal history and custom. Even for the skilled interpreter, the sociolinguist or the anthropologist, such references may remain obscure. If we restrict our teaching only to the simpler folk-tales, we may find that students get a wrong impression of African maturity.

Since the term "literature" is employed, it may be necessary to indicate that the literary standard of vernacular texts is seldom a relevant issue. This is not surprising, and perhaps it would be impolitic even for an African to claim for these texts literary qualities which, in the Western sense, they were never intended to have. If they have them, then it is by chance and not by creative literary achievement. African vernacular literature, when it is brought into the classroom even for linguistic purposes, suffers a severe displacement of purpose. The folk literature of Africa is a transcription, often by Westerners, of what was never intended to be written. It springs from a way of life, a communal life, and when we abstract any part of it for classroom purposes, we are left with the shadow, not the reality. As literature, in the universal sense, it must take its place with all other folk-literature. Its true significance in modern life is restored only when we interpret it as originating from a way of life, not as a literary medium.

African vernacular literature is evidence of a way of life different from the Western way of life, but it may be legitimate to doubt whether the folk-literature actually depicts or delineates the African way of life. It may be possible to deduce the way of life from it, but in some instances even such a deduction may be difficult to make. The idea that the vernacular literature provides a convenient window for looking upon traditional African society is sure to bring some disappointments. The fact that evidence from anthropology and sociology is often needed to interpret the true significance of many texts indicates that the texts are not always self-evident. Folk-tales in Africa are seldom realistic accounts of contemporary African society. The entertainment they were meant to provide was not of realistic true-to-life variety, but is close to Grimm and Hans Andersen, representatives of a particular genre, neither of whom would be regarded as being of the line of Chaucer or Sinclair Lewis. The didactic purpose of much African folk-literature, enforcing African standards of behaviour, may be said to detract from its value as literature. The good writer, in the Western sense, guards against being 'too obvious,' but the obvious didactic intention of a great deal of the vernacular literature is so purposeful as to cease to be self-conscious. After all, this is what it is for. The result, from the universal literary point of view, is often quite crippling, but then, it was not meant as literature.

These considerations are fundamental in the use of vernacular literature for African language teaching. The purpose of modern African language teaching is clearly to teach the contemporary language. This may not be found in folk-texts, however useful these may be within the scope for which they were intended. They tend to exclude any reference to the United Nations, the Olympic Games, fibre glass products, or the war in Vietnam. A major difficulty for most African languages is finding texts which are contemporary and relevant in the modern African world.

My own experience has been in teaching East African languages. For most of these the vernacular literature has yet to be printed. The chances of its ever being seen on the printed page seem more remote than was the case, say, ten years ago. The oral tradition is being considerably weakened as time goes by. Even in the rural areas, like the Sukuma country of Tanzania, after sun-set and the evening meal, the transistor radio is preferred to the tales and riddles and proverbs that Grannie could still tell the young people. The language they hear on the transistor is not Sukuma, but Swahili. The predominance of this language throughout East Africa is having a profound, and in some measure an adverse affect upon some of the traditional uses of tribal languages. Whereas previous to independence the future of many of the lesser languages was still uncertain, today it seems clear that the position is resolved. The existing linguistic situation has become a firm situation with no likelihood of any significant modification in the foreseeable future.

What is that Situation?

With the notable exception of Swahili, no East African language has any considerable and accessible corpus of material including both modern and traditional work. Important languages like Kikuyu and Ganda can boast only of a relatively small collection of utilitarian, educational works of a fairly elementary nature, together with the usual religious books from mission presses, pamphlets, collections of proverbs, a few local histories, and a sprinkling of newspapers. In most languages, some books of the Bible, a few primers, a book of proverbs, a few small books on local custom or local history are all that exist in the written word. African writers for whom Swahili is a second language are well aware that there is a considerable market for what they may choose to write in Swahili, but not in their mother-tongue. There is an appreciation by African readers of different tribes and even of separate East African countries of what is written in Swahili.

The amount of available material in print is generally in proportion to the political importance of the relevant language within the general East African field. Swahili is in a class by itself, not only because of its political importance, but also for historical reasons. Swahili literature is on many different levels. With the possible exception of Hausa in West Africa, it is the only African language south of the Sahara in which creative writing, within definable limits, has long been an individual activity. Swahili is the only East African language with pre-19th century literature.

In my experience of teaching Swahili, Kijuyu and Ganda, a balance has been attempted between description of the language and speech practice. The balance is more easily maintained in teaching Swahili than in teaching other East African languages, because Swahili, as taught to most students, has a limited application insofar as it has become standardized. This means that from the start the teacher can omit detailed mention of dialect variants and of phonological items occurring in dialect, but not in Standard Swahili. This limitation, imposed by the general acceptance of standardized forms and reinforced by the fact that Swahili has a well-established literary form, is in the first instance a help both to teacher and student, because there are ample texts available written in Standard Swahili.

The limitation implicit in the term "Standard Swahili" is not self-chosen by the teacher, but is inherent in the general language situation. It is important, however, to emphasize that even if the situation were different, it would be necessary for the teacher to decide what should or should not be taught. The direct method comes sooner into effect in teaching Swahili and can be supplemented by the use of simple modern texts for reading material. It is necessary to emphasize the word simple, because not all modern texts are simple. The vernacular press, for example, is not always simple reading. The student has to be taught to read with discrimination. There is a tendency for some to believe that because a paper is a Swahili newspaper printed in black on white, the language employed must be representative Swahili. Newspapers emanating from Tanzania are usually of a good linguistic standard, but even there translational problems are not always easily overcome. In Kenya the Swahili employed in Nairobi newspapers may vary considerably from what is considered acceptable along the coast or in Tanzania. I am reminded of a visit to the offices of Taifa Leo in Mombasa to see the translators. They turned out to be two young Kikuyus who sat with a copy of Johnson's Swahili-English Dictionary and who, on being introduced, invited my cooperation in translating the term jury system into Swahili. In spite of a gentle suggestion on my part, I was interested to see later that the term was translated korti ya kienyeji 'native court,' which, of course, has no connection with any jury system.

This is a reminder that much that is written in Swahili in the mass media is the work of young men for whom Swahili is a second language. They have to translate from a third language, English. The results, even in Tanzania, are frequently quite disastrous to normal Swahili syntax and vocabulary, and the students should be sufficiently instructed as to be able to identify deviations from the norm.

By learning to read the vernacular press, the student does not automatically equip himself to read Swahili literature at some other level. The interpretation of Swahili poetry, for example, is a highly skilled activity calling for special training. Much of it is in dialect, and the literary conventions allow for omission of certain grammatical elements and a special syntax. The different levels of Swahili literature require different skills. On the most elementary level, it also has to be remembered that student achievement varies: some are good at reading, but not at speaking the language, and perhaps vice versa. An important principle is not to expect too much of the student when he is learning an African language in a foreign country. Some who are backward in a foreign country achieve considerable fluency when in daily contact with Africans in Africa, but usually only when they have had a good grounding in the mechanics of the language.

Another advantage in teaching Swahili, in comparison with the teaching of most other Bantu East African languages, is that Swahili is not a tone language. The situation may be different in West Africa, but for East Africa the tonal system can, of course, be described provided that the tonal structure has been analyzed satisfactorily--and this is not so for all languages of this type in East Africa--but for the tones to be taught, and not merely described analytically the teacher must be a native speaker of the language. I know of no native speaker of an East African language who is capable of describing analytically the tonal system of his own language. Similarly I know of no Westerner who has absorbed the tones of an East African language so as to be absolutely reliable in this matter. In a tone-language like Kikuyu or Ganda it is not necessary to learn the tones of the language to be able to read texts in the language. Tonality in these languages is not in the written word a factor likely to involve ambiguity of meaning, because the context usually provides the required meaning. In spite of this, teachers of East and Central African tone languages, even in practical courses, try to combine the teaching of tones with the teaching of other more practical features. In the recently published Basic Course for Kirundi (Foreign Service Institute) an attempt is made to teach the tones of the language even though, to quote the compiler, "Kirundi tones present the student with formidable difficulties on the grammatical level."[1]

For an East African tone-language the balance between linguistic description and instruction by the direct method can, for practical purposes, best be achieved by making only passing references to tonal behaviour. The conscious effort to teach the tones by reference to tonal principles places too heavy a burden on the student, a burden that can be lifted only when he unconsciously assimilates the tones by daily contact with native speakers of the language. This is not to say that there is no place in a University classroom for the description of tonal structures, but that this belongs to a much higher level of academic activity, at least in relation to East African languages, than elementary language teaching. Such description helps the student to understand the tonal system, but not necessarily to use it. Languages such as Kikuyu and Ganda have been taught for a number of years in London without detailed reference to tones. In the case of Kikuyu there is a complicated system of tonal displacement which is difficult enough in itself to describe, let alone to expect the student consciously to apply it in speech practice. It is doubtful if the tonal structure of Ganda has yet been properly interpreted, and although in the standard grammar by Tucker and Ashton there is valuable information about Ganda tones, in practice this information is subsidiary.[2]

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[1] Kirundi: Basic Course. Foreign Service Institute, p. 77.

For the literature, at least in East Africa, tones can be completely disregarded. Even so, the teacher must, whether in regard to tones or to any other aspect of the language, have a wider knowledge of the language than perhaps he reveals in the limitations of his teaching duties. In the case of Swahili it is essential, unfortunately, to stress this, not least because in the U.S.A., and no doubt elsewhere, at the present time there are people teaching the language whose knowledge of Swahili is very largely limited to what they teach. Those who come from Nairobi and its environs often do not speak a form of the language acceptable to the established canons of Standard Swahili. Teaching assistants in Peace Corps courses, for instance, include or have included Kikuyus and Luos from Kenya whose Swahili is extremely inadequate. When confronted with people for whom Swahili is their mother-tongue, these assistants readily admit their uncertain knowledge of the language.

A knowledge of coastal Swahili approximating to generally accepted forms is essential for any teacher of Swahili. Only with such knowledge is he able to evaluate and estimate the significance of linguistic items that he finds in the current mass media or in a particular area of Swahili-speaking East Africa. The idea that "anything goes" is all too prevalent in much that passes for Swahili today, because the language covers such a wide geographical area that people away from the coast tend to use syntactic patterns from their own tribal language or from the English press. The teacher should be able to indicate to his students the stylistics of any text, but this can only be done by knowing the language in much greater depth than even the considerable depth of Standard Swahili.

Traditional Swahili literature (poetry and historical chronicles and aphorisms) is the concern of the specialist or of the very advanced student. Given the same general situation for other East African languages, the folk literature of any given tribe would have similar status as, say, traditional Swahili poetry, but the situation is not the same. In Swahili the traditional poetry is a separate genre representing only a part of what exists in the written word. The folk literature of many East African tribes may represent almost all that there is in a particular language. Languages other than Swahili in East Africa do not have the same measure of compulsion to expand their usage in the written word to include the expression of such a diverse variety of foreign aspects of life. Swahili is undergoing a tremendous process of linguistic adaptation and expansion, not for the first time, and it is doing so on behalf of many other East African languages which do not in the first instance have the same urgent need for borrowings, but which ultimately adapt borrowings from Swahili adapted forms. This process of borrowing is of early origin in East Africa. Words borrowed into Swahili from Arabic found their way, where they were needed to fill a gap, into tribal languages. The extent of the borrowing is enormously greater in Swahili, of course, than in the other languages, because the immediate occasion for expanding vocabulary and even syntactic patterns in Swahili is much more imperative.

The effect of this change upon the student is extremely important and affects the general situation in relation to vernacular literature. It becomes less important for the student to know terms from the traditional literature. He wants to know Swahili, but he may have no special desire to know much about the Swahili people.

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[2] A Luganda Grammar. Ashton, Mulira, Ndawula and Tucker. London, 1954.

This implies that in modern Swahili there is much that bears no relation whatsoever to the Swahili people as such, and this is indeed the case. Swahili is a modern language able to cope with contexts completely foreign to the Swahili way of life, and in fact the language is having to cope immediately with such contexts. If the Swahili language had stayed only with the Swahili people--and there are places on the coast where this is so, and the language they speak is therefore in many ways different from Standard Swahili--there would have been a limitation of linguistic expansion. The important difference between Swahili and languages like Kikuyu, Ganda, Sukuma, etc., is that in practical terms, and particularly in reference to the written word, it belongs to a much wider sphere of reference. It is not, and never has been, like the other languages, a tribal language, and so it has an identity which none of the tribal languages can claim.

It is not suggested, of course, that people like the Kikuyu and the Ganda are still living in the world of their folk-literature. Obviously their speech has reference to the modern world, but they are not so favourably placed as regards mass media, publications by foreign agencies or by East African agencies in their own language, broadcasting, etc. The modern languages of such peoples is not fairly represented in the comparatively limited scope of their written word. It should be the business of agencies of higher education to see that students of the more important secondary languages, like Kikuyu and Ganda--secondary within the wider field--should have the opportunity to learn the modern language from modern texts, and not in the first instance from the folk-lore.

Within the wider modern context, vernacular literature in relation to Western literature, as an individual, creative activity, is of very limited range in East Africa, even in Swahili. Although there is a considerable corpus of Swahili vernacular literature, its merits are of a different kind from those we usually attribute to Western literature. In poetry, for instance, even today the Swahili poet writing in the vernacular, provided that he is a good poet within the tradition and not writing some banal rubbish for a newspaper, remains above all a conservative who must observe the time-honoured literary conventions. The few who break away from Swahili convention to adopt Western literary conventions and methods--in the novel and short story, but never in poetry--are experimenting in what is for them a new medium.

Traditional Swahili poetry, though of foreign Arabian origin, at least shared with African folk-literature the idea of audience participation. Just as in folk tales, the poetry included choruses or songs in which the audience could take part. Shorter poems were written for a particular person or a particular group of people. The idea of writing for the unseen reader is quite foreign to Swahili tradition and never existed in tribal society. Writing as a means of self-expression is equally foreign to East African society. Swahili short stories in the vernacular press are probably the most genuine literary development in the Western direction, while at the same time they are addressed to an African audience. The plots are repetitious, the subject-matter deals with the consumption of intoxicating spirits by men who are invariably stripped of their possessions, sometimes even their trousers, by prostitutes, and there is the inevitable moral, a hangover from the traditional didacticism. As one well-known writer, Bakathir, has expressly stated:

"My purpose is to penetrate the secrets of the whores and pimps of the Tanga region."[3] But it is literature of a sort by the people and for the people, which is more than can be said for the few who prefer to write in English for a wider, but generally non-African, audience.

The traditional poets still write for a local group and their work is judged by the extent to which they preserve the conventions of prosodic form, of syllabic measure and of rhyme. When Mathias Mnyampara of Dar es Salaam had a collection of his poems published recently, I congratulated him on introducing a verse-form never before used in Swahili poetry.[4] He replied, "We had a meeting about it first, and my people agreed." This shows the respect the poets have for their audience. They are guardians of a literary tradition, not pioneers of literary creation. But there are exceptions, and Shaaban Robert of Tanga was one.[5] He could write poetry in the tradition, but he wrote short stories and essays in the Western manner as well. When he died, the African Minister of Education referred to him as "the Shakespeare of Africa." He was never within a million miles of emulating Shakespeare, of course, but I think he was nearer Shakespeare than many better-known Africans who write in a Western language, because, like Shakespeare, he wrote in his own language, and the common people respected him for this.

Since texts by Shaaban Robert have been frequently used for Swahili language teaching, it may be as well to point out that the reason for their use lies in their linguistic quality, not in any value they may have as literature. For the most part his work, as literature, does not justify translation into a Western language. This may come as a surprise to some people who know his name. The distinction between linguistic and literary value is also relevant to folk-literature. As a creative writer Shaaban's achievement was comparatively a small one, but as an exponent of the language on perhaps a rather self-conscious literary level he deserves to be read. Although he experimented in literary genres which at the time were even more foreign to East Africans than they are today (the essay in the Baconian manner, the biography, the realistic short-story, the imaginative allegory), and although he was mindful of the awful necessity of submitting manuscripts to distant British publishers, he always had his African audience in mind. Shaaban's whole approach to his work was an African approach even though he was familiar with the copied foreign literary models. Even into the foreign genres of literature he brought attitudes which are recognizably Swahili attitudes, the heavy didacticism, so heavy at times as to cause the Western reader some anguish of soul; the strange lack of any humor, a feature from the Islamic Swahili literary tradition and not at all an African characteristic; respect for established social and moral values, again a strong feature of Swahili poetry whereby the poet is the guardian of spiritual values.

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[3] From *Mwafrika*, the exact quote in Swahili is: *Natoboa siri za makahaba na makuwadi wa mwambao wa Tanga*. (July, 1965, exact date of copy not recorded.)

[4] *Diwani ya Mnyampala*. M. E. Mnyampala. Dar es Salaam, 1963.

[5] Robert, Shaaban. *Maisha Yangu*. London, 1949; *Kusadikika*. London, 1951; *Adili na Nduguze*. London, 1952; *Maisha ya Siti Binti Saad*. Supplement to JEASC, no. 28/1; *Marudi Mema*. London, 1952; *Masomo yenye Adili*. Nairobi, 1959; *Almasi za Afrika*. Nairobi, 1960; *Pambo ya Lugha*. Johannesburg, 1960; *Kielezo cha Insha*. Johannesburg, 1961. Etc.

Shaaban Robert's relationship to his audience was of the greatest importance. He never disappeared from the East African scene to visit Western capitals or universities. He was always there in Tanga or nearby. His people knew him, and he knew them. This type of relationship sets up values which the outsider cannot easily appreciate. There is audience participation here of the kind that any writer would like to have, but the strength of the participation and appreciation is not always to be measured in terms of Western literary criticism. Doubtless there were many of his fellow Africans who praised his work without ever having read a word of it, but non-Africans have done the same. And now the tendency is for his work to be praised for merits it never had.

The legend of Shaaban Robert is in itself almost a part of the folk-literature of East Africa, and it is certainly a reminder that the African audience may not share the Western scholar's reasons for praise or blame. On the linguistic level we are on safer ground, though students deserve some sympathy for having to take the medicine with the sweet. So often the subject-matter of texts with high linguistic value, if not bitter to the taste are at best rather tasteless for the Western student. All this didacticism is a weariness to the flesh. Apologies are in the air. It has to be suggested by the teacher that this is not how Africans really are, but only when they write, and that Shaaban was not writing for Western students. Even for Shaaban it seems that allowances have to be made.

A recent selective Swahili bibliography by Dr. Marcel Van Spaandonck has listed 797 items chosen from a total of 2,500 items collected.[6] More than half of these are linguistic studies, mostly by Western scholars. When one examines the items listed under the general heading of "literature," one is forced to conclude that they do not represent the cultural status of progressive East Africans at the present time, nor is there any indication that the literature is moving towards any kind of identity with the avant garde in modern East African society. While accepting that good writers do not grow on trees, there are factors in the East African situation which should tend to promote the growth of indigenous literature of high quality. Difficulties hindering such a growth in other parts of Africa simply do not exist in East Africa, more particularly, as in Ghana for instance, the absence of a central language medium. The linguistic situation is especially favorable for a widening of literary horizons in Swahili. The feeling for poetry amongst the ordinary people of East Africa is quite unique. It seems at first sight quite remarkable that the Swahili renaissance, so easily observable in almost every other sector of East African society, should not yet have shown itself in the field of Swahili literature.

An article in the East African Journal, December, 1965, by Tabon Lo Liyong, a Ugandan graduate student at Howard University, is entitled "Can We Correct the Literary Barrenness in East Africa?"[7] He addresses Mphahlele, the

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[6] Van Spaandonck, Marcel. Practical and Systematical Swahili Bibliography. Leiden, 1965.

[7] East Africa Journal, December, 1965.

African writer who has been at Chemchemi, an East African Institute for promoting cultural activity, in these words:

> "Teach us to write . . . else we go migrating in search of inspiration to Mbari . . . We want more (writings), but we do not even have any yet . . . Poor muses, you chose the wrong mountains, for ours seem not to be Parnassuses. Is it time which is not yet in joint? Are you uncomfortable in your new abodes on Kilimanjaro, Kerenyaga (Mt. Kenya) and Ruwenzori? Or do you receive no sacrifices? Yet we boast a proliferation of witch-doctors. Oh ye muses, spare our babblers. Give them time. . . They are coming: Homer in Khaki shorts, Virgil in monkey toga, Dante in witch-doctor's garb, Shakespeare who speaks a little Karamojong, a T. S. Eliot who speaks Etesot."

He blames the British for teaching East Africans to be practical, not romantic, a moot point, perhaps, and he considers that "the best places for spawning our future writers" are our universities. "An interested faculty member might inspire individuals directly." "Courses in the craft of fiction or short story writing or playwriting should be made parts of the English curriculum."

The article is welcome indication of the growing "itch for literature" in East Africa, and as one English writer once put it: "When once the itch of literature comes over a man, nothing can cure it but the scratching of a pen."

But what may be the reasons for the comparatively barren literary scene in East Africa? The idea that Africans realize the monetary advantages of writing in English, because of the wider market, is not relevant to the problem at the present time. If manuscripts in English by East African authors were flooding publishers' offices this might be the major reason for the rejection of Swahili for literary purposes, but there is contrary evidence. In comparison with West Africa, English writing by Africans has scarcely got under way in East Africa. The reasons must lie elsewhere. If we look more closely at Van Spaandonck's bibliography, we find that the section on "Poetry" is divided into two sections, viz. "Traditional" and "Modern." The so-called "Modern" poetry is modern only in the sense that it was written by people of our own day. It is not modern poetry in the Western sense at all. This poetry may have some contemporary references, but it is fettered by the conventional chains of syllabic measure and heavy rhyme. The only modern thing about it is that it has been published in recent years, but it breaks no new ground. It is usually not as good as the "Traditional" poetry, but it strives to be derriere garde, which is what Swahili poetry in the tradition should be.

From this it will be obvious that we cannot hope for a natural development from the rigid conventionalism of Swahili poetry to freer verse-forms. The people feel very strongly about their poetry. A suggestion I once made in a Swahili talk from the Dar es Salaam broadcasting station that poets should try to experiment and write as they feel without regard for the conventions met with some rather violent reactions. Swahili poetry has to be judged by different standards from Western poetry. It serves a different purpose, a sociological purpose of instructing and defending moral standards and practices, of expressing values relating to conduct and achievement. It is part of the Swahili people's folk-literature, extended in use to some tribal peoples but retaining much of the spirit and certainly the form.

If we examine the list of 203 Swahili prose-works listed by Van Spaandonck, we find that most of the items are very much the same in subject-matter as publications in tribal languages. Spaandonck has a section for "Novels and Stories," but of the 101 items in this section only two bear any resemblance to the Western novel, and a very slight resemblance at that. The first is Mzimu wa Watu wa Kale, by Muhammed Said Abdullah, a detective story with an African background,[8] and Kurwa na Doto, by Muhammed Saleh Farsy, a well-written story from Zanzibar, difficult for mainland Africans to understand in detail because of allusions to Zanzibar custom.[9] The ninety-nine other prose items in this section are folk-tales, many of which are not very popular with mainland Africans because they bear unmistakable signs of their Arabian origin.

The evidence from Van Spaandonck's bibliography of Swahili writings would seem to show that Swahili literature itself is a product of its African environment. It is the literature of a closed society, and yet in East Africa today the doors are open to the world. We have established that Swahili literature, in spite of the translations from Moliere, Voltaire, Omar Khayyam, Lewis Carrol, Rudyard Kipling, Shakespeare, and Jonathan Swift--an ill-assorted crew--is localized, folksy, conventional, comparable to folk-literature anywhere else in Africa in most respects. Swahili does not have such a big advantage over the tribal languages after all. As with Africans of a separate tradition, Swahilis see in their literature a close association with the traditional life of the people. For them to deny its value, literary or otherwise, may seem to them a denial of values they hold most dear.

This is the enigma, that African folk-literature, even Swahili poetry, is inseparable from the life of the people, a way of life which is rapidly becoming a matter of history. The language-teacher must take what texts he can get. So long as his students understand the general situation, he may be at no great disadvantage linguistically with the material available. For Swahili the linguistic renaissance is an established fact. The teacher waits now for the literary new-birth.

That the literary renaissance must spring from new beginnings is evident from the examination of the stylistics and subject-matter of African folklore. If we accept the main categories of "Legend" and "History," even where the legendary does not immediately betray itself by elements of the miraculous, by the repetition of well-known standard motives, typical patterns and themes (through omission of clear details of time and place), it is generally recognizable by its composition. It runs far too smoothly. What Auerbach has said of the literature of antiquity, and of legend in particular, is equally true of African legendary tales: "Legend arranges its material in a simple and straightforward way; it detaches it from its contemporary historical context, so that the latter will not confuse it; it knows only clearly-outlined men and women who act from few and simple motives and the continuity of whose feelings remains uninterrupted."[10]

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[8] Abdullah, Muhammed Said. Mzimu wa Watu wa Kale. Dar es Salaam, 1960.

[9] Farsy, Muhammed Saleh. Kurwa na Doto. Dar es Salaam, 1962.

[10] Auerbach, Erich. Mimesis, Princeton, 1953, p. 25.

Vernacular literature categorized as "History" reveals characteristics belonging more to legendary structure than to historical structure, like, for example, the tendency to a smoothing down and harmonizing of events and to a simplification of motives. Tribal histories and historical chronicles are seldom interpretative. As Homer did, African chroniclers like to bring in the lineage and station of their characters. Swahili audiences, like Greek audiences and indeed most tribal African audiences, were schooled in genealogy. To give a man's family-tree was a way of placing him, just as in the West information about a man's family or his educational background is considered to be a help in assessing his place in the scheme of things. But the frequent use of genealogical facts tends to blot out any idea of historical change; the illusion is of a static unchanging society, in comparison with which the succession of individuals and changes in personal fortune appear unimportant. If one Sultan or Chief is killed, well, there is always another to take his place.

In all this, although it is readily admitted that African folk-tales may sometimes be about ordinary people and everyday African things, the characterization is presented in such bold relief that no room is left for the subtleties normally associated with literary presentation. It is a matter of technique. The narrator is hardly ever involved in what he relates. Cinderellas, or her equivalents, abound, but they remain African Cinderellas, and, at least to this foreigner, never real people. Behind any individual Cinderella it is difficult to imagine any other Cinderellas. One is enough if we acknowledge that this is only legend, but if the vernacular literature is to claim comparison with literature in general, we may have justification in asking to be introduced to at least one Cinderella who is a real person. Behind the characters of African folk-tales we would like to see a whole world of similar African lives, but for the most part this remains wishful thinking.

The interpretation of reality through literary representation can be said to have begun in Africa in writings, whether in the vernacular or not, after a Western pattern. We do not look for this interpretation in the folk-literature, but for other values altogether. In the vernaculars literary realism has made only a very small beginning. Plato discussed literary realism in Book 10 of the Republic, but it was not until the 19th century that Stendhal and Balzac opened the way for modern realism with its increasingly rich forms. In view of the long historical process involved in European literature in this respect, perhaps we should not expect immediate evidence of a new realism in African vernacular literature. The process does not have to be repeated in Africa, because African writers may learn quickly from Western models. We may have to wait a very long time before the African writer can, in his own language, create "forms more real than the living man." For the time being, we would be content with "the living man."

Meanwhile, in relation to students of African languages, T. S. Eliot's maxim cannot be said to apply, that "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." We can bear much more than we are getting from African texts.

Perhaps we can bear with some reality in considering finally some of the implications of what has been stated in this paper. In African studies today we are concerned with the reality of present-day Africa. The oral literature is still highly relevant to the interpretation of the modern African scene and is by itself a vast field of study. Whatever we may have said in this paper about the oral literature or folk-literature in relation to modern

Western literature must not be misunderstood. This literary giant is only sleeping. He is not dead yet.

As for African language, it would need an army of faculty members to begin to cover the linguistic field. The linguistic riches of Africa seem inexhaustible. The most that university departments can do is to choose, if possible, which of the more important languages shall be taught, and to find the teachers to do the job and to extend their own research to a wider field.

At Wisconsin a regular department has been organized, the first of its kind in the States, giving both undergraduate and graduate degrees in African languages and literature, in addition to the degrees offered in Linguistics with an African-language specialization. Students majoring in African Languages and Literature may specialize either in tradtional literature, in modern African literature in English or French, or in Linguistics. Wisconsin was the first American university to offer African literature courses in the original languages, and at present, these courses are offered by specialists in Swahili literature and in South African vernacular literature. The intention is to widen the scope of these courses by recruiting scholars who are specialists in the languages and literature of other areas.

The general emphasis will continue to be towards an appreciation of the literary uses of particular African languages, traditional and modern uses, rather than towards their linguistic description. Even so, from what has been said in this paper, interpretation of literary forms implies a considerable knowledge of formal linguistic structure. The linguistic analysis, in our Department, is regarded only as a means to an end. It is taken for granted that any student capable of studying the more difficult texts has achieved fluency in speaking the language, and to make this possible intensive instruction has to be maintained for two years. The third year for students majoring in African Language and Literature is the year when they study "the literature" as distinct from working texts to obtain language fluency.

Discussion

Alexandre: Do you use political speeches as examples of the modern literate use of language?

Harries: Texts of important speeches in Swahili, such as those of Nyerere are easy to obtain, and many students have been interested in writing papers on Swahili political terminology.

Arnott: British practice does distinguish between texts used in the earlier stages of language training and texts studied for examinations because of their illumination of the language and its cultural situation. I feel that speeches might properly be put in the former class.

Harries: The kinds of material which are available for Swahili are unfortunately not available for other East African languages.

Guthrie: Bemba is one language for which a large number of spontaneously written texts of various degrees of difficulty can be found. Some languages lend themselves better to literary inspiration. There are other languages, however, where this doesn't seem to be quite so obvious. When I first began working with Bemba, I immediately felt that it was a language in which great literary attainment was possible. And I do not doubt that Swahili is the kind of language which would inspire people to write good contemporary literature.

Arnott: In West Africa, Fula, rather than Hausa, lends itself more to literary form.

Harries: I cannot altogether agree with Professor Guthrie. A good deal is being written in Swahili, but its content still refers to the old life instead of dealing with the new. But I see no reason why a sophisticated manuscript can or should not be written in Swahili.

Povey: I have a general suspicion of the thesis that certain languages are inherently better for literature. It is like the idea that Italian is the "language of love." I am doubtful of this as a general philosophy.

Guthrie: I did not mean it as a general philosophy. I was simply taking into account that some languages are more supple than others. In the African field, there is no question that there are differences.

Jordan: In the case of Swahili and Hausa, perhaps it is not a question of something inherent in these two languages that accounts for what is produced in them, but rather the fact that they are spoken by such diverse peoples over so large an area that, as a result, they belong to nobody and nobody is very conscious about the esthetic possibilities of the languages. Even though, in the case of Swahili, there is one group to whom it is native, with the growth of the number of people who spoke the language and therefore the number of people to whom the original speakers had to accommodate themselves, the people may become less and less aware of the aesthetic spirit of their own language. It is my experience, though, that there are some languages which are quite capable of literary expression but simply have never been utilized. Some non-literary dialects of English are good examples.

Harries: Dr. Guthrie, what is it that would make one language more subtle than another? Is it a question of tones or of, say, vocabulary?

Guthrie: It is really a question of flexibility of expression. All languages have a great deal of flexibility, but it may be lost, in some cases, when the language is committed to writing. A language which retains flexibility even when written allows the writer a chance to manipulate the language in a way which communicates his feelings as well as meaning to his readers. There are some languages which just have not got this quality.

CANONS OF CRITICISM FOR NEO-AFRICAN LITERATURE

John F. Povey

During the last decade or two a new erea of the African arts has developed. This is a literature by Africans and with African themes but written in English, French, and to a lesser extent in Portuguese. Up to this time it would depend upon definition whether we considered that an "African literature" existed at all. If the oral material constituted a literature, it did not exist in any way that could much occupy the scholar of literature. Even if collected, translated and made available, this oral material would not fit into preconceptions of literary scholarship; it would have no connection with the conventional genre slots of Western writing. The prose consisted of riddles and fables--often similar to the animal fabliaux. The poems were praise poems only occasionally approaching epic narrative structure but usually and largely celebrationary. Drama was an integral part of the tribal and religious ritual which was often elaborate enough to enact itself like a dance drama--a device which anticipates the folk operas of Duro Ladipo.

Such literature has been the concern of the linguist and the anthropologist and has occasionally occupied those who concern themselves with myth and folk-lore studies. A tiny amount of this wealth of material is made available to the general reader through such translations as the Oxford University Press African Literature series, edited by Professor Wilfred Whitely. But no one has yet, perhaps primarily through ignorance, attempted to do more than review this as an interesting aspect of primitive Africa. There has been little attempt to draw this material into any wider connection with the mainspring of world literatures. Perhaps this is, of necessity, a correct approach; perhaps it is a fact that such matter must be of concern primarily to those studies that are attendant and ancillary to literature, though even here I would question if this is a just view. Whatever its anthropological interest, Beowulf, as an example, must surely be considered a literary work first. But if, conceivably, this view can be maintained about the traditional oral literature of Africa, it cannot be maintained when we come to the recent contemporary literature from that continent.

The new literature from Africa is written by highly educated and sophisticated men, learned in the European tradition, often studied in French and English literatures, besides being virtually mother-tongue fluent in these languages. Although the writers are African, it is more easily possible to seek out some link between their writing and the twentieth century western trends than the connection between their work and the traditional forms of African literature. (I find myself driven to use the phrase "traditional African literature" but I should, before doing so, reiterate the qualifications to this term I offered above.) When one talks of the poetry of J. P. Clark one finds oneself making reference to the style of Hopkins. With Christopher Okigbo one recalls Ezra Pound. Soyinka clearly knows the drama of modern Ireland and analogies have been offered between the novels of Chinua Achebe and Joseph Conrad. Such comparisons suggest what happens when a non-African looks at recent writing from Africa, he finds echoes and cross-references to the European literatures. However, these writers are also clearly African; they draw upon African themes, describe African settings; perhaps may demonstrate African attitudes in more subtle and concrete ways than an outsider is able to recognize from his own different experience.

Achebe's first and most famous novel Things Fall Apart may offer an example of this problem. We may think that we have a rough idea of the theme, the effect of western change on traditional social organization; the fairly common dichotomy between progress and conservatism that can be traced in many well-known American books--even Huckleberry Finn can be seen in this way. We hear that the hero, either in total despair, or as a kind of repudiation of the craven adjustments his once boldly resistant clan are making, commits suicide. We think we also understand the force of this resolution. Our response may indeed be a reasonable though limited one. But it is possible to learn from other sources that the African attitude towards suicides is far more violent than ours in the rejection of such an act. This means that the African reaction--and above all the writer's intention--may be other than we perceive and much stronger. Perhaps we may need outside information to allow us to judge what is the proper response to an event or situation. Sometimes we think we can work out an adequate approximation to the African event. In Toads for Supper Ike has his plot hinge upon a parent's horror at his son's desire to marry a girl from another tribe. Can we assume an equivalent sentiment if we transfer this issue to this country and judge it against the reaction of a possessive parent who learns that his son intends to marry a girl of another religion? or race? or from the wrong side of the tracks? Judith Gleason in her book This Africa, the first substantial study of this new literature in this country, has valuably pointed out such an area of confusion; the reaction of the two continents to the heroic figure. Our stress tends to fall upon individualism, the heroic man struggling alone, isolated in his individual battle. The African might well find this concept less praiseworthy for in their society the traditional ideal of behaviour has not been the isolated virtue of the individual, but that of the group or clan; upon the tribal cohesion upon which all social order rested.

Perhaps this kind of information warns us of a very dangerous grey zone where the European reader is, in fact, unable to interpret the African situation correctly, simply because there does appear to be an English equivalent. Total ignorance is easily recognized--blank incomprehension. A misinterpretation shows no evidence of its existence. This danger is going to be the more common because the literature is available to the non-specialist. This is the result of the almost accidental fact that this writing is in English and we are apt to assume that since it is "our" language, we can, given good-will and intelligence, understand what is written in this medium. The difference is this: one might feel humbled by ignorance in being asked to make a judgment of a Yoruba pot, we would not know the aesthetic principles of its production, but many educated persons would assume that they had every qualification and right to judge a play in English even if it were written by a Yoruba. It is around this attitude that this paper and the deliberations of this meeting must rest, for it is this dilemma that we must resolve in deciding the place of this literature in the American academic context.

The title of my paper is "Canons of Literary Criticism." As we face the bulk of this new literature one has to ask oneself what standards can be applied to this work. The decision is not a merely theoretical one but will decide what place this writing can have in the American academic field. There are three hypothetical critical positions one can take. (1) This material is African and can only be judged by Africans or by those who are learned and specialized in African studies; anthropology, linguistics. (2) This writing is in English; it has a large English-speaking international audience and it must be evaluated like any other literature in the language. (3) We could attempt to work out some compromise that would allow us to develop an aesthetic that brings together elements of these two conflicting views. Let us review the nature of these critical standpoints and consider how effective and how tenable they are as bases for evaluating this literature and what their implications will be for such studies in the American college.

The first view is that these works are African only, and that the accidental use of the ex-colonial language has no fundamental significance but may be merely a transitional phase in the creation of a true African literature. This passionate contention often is conjoined with the insistence that a true African literature can only be created when an African vernacular is the vehicle for such writing. The most ardent and provocative advocate of such a principle is Mr. Obi Wali, now at the University of Nsukka who has maintained his belief in urgent rhetoric in the pages of Transition. There may be some conceivable truth in his view but with the exception of the Nigerian playwright Duro Ladipo and the attempts, part government inspired, to create a literature in Swahili, *there is little evidence at the moment that such a literature will come to pass.* It may be agreeable to indulge in the luxury of such speculation at conferences (using English to do it!) but Mr. Wali's thesis is defeated at the most fundamental level--African writers are writing in English and for good reasons both linguistic and pragmatic.

Such an attitude may, however, be implicit, even in the literature written in a European language. The theory of "negritude" (dare one use that word again at a conference without where being dismayed signs followed by the exodus of one's audience?) obviously stands upon the assumption that outside criticism is both inaccurate and reprehensible. Sometimes this feeling is asserted directly, at other times such a view can be derived from the assumptions made by those who hold to the theory. "Negritude" at its most aggressive constitutes, as I understand it, an assertion of the fundamental differentiation between African and European. That is, in very properly rejecting the threat of assimilation based upon a presumption of African cultural inferiority--a view that has manifested itself in the grotesque assumption that the best target for an educated African is to become a black European--it can become, in extremis, a kind of reverse literary racialism. The total rejection of European values that may be achieved does, to some extent, eliminate the principles of European criticism too. By this thesis if you are not a negro; not attuned to those deep, African, blood rhythm harmonies, you cannot understand the literary intentions of the African writer. It was Dorothy Blair who remarked rather tartly at the conference on African literature in Dakar on this aspect of negritude, querying what its proponents expected of the critic if they insisted on the irrelevance of all judgments not made by Africans.

I might add, in passing, that this philosophy has had a bad influence on much African writing, particularly, to be specific, on French African poetry. The holders of the theory of negritude have set up a kind of literary dictatorship, arrogating to themselves the approval of themes and styles, attacking, vehemently and personally those like that urbane and distinguished African critic Ezekial Mphahlele who dare query their assertions. We know from the pages of Presence Africaine the quality attained when material is selected for its appropriate sentiments rather than its literary caliber. Here surely is a tangential but significant reason for maintaining the primacy of literary standards for our evaluations.

The other significant area from which the case for African standards of evaluation is pressed is from anthropology. It is this discipline that has largely to date been concerned with African literature. The traditional oral poetry and the stories are virtually the data for much anthropological investigation. This would be of significance in our present deliberations because, carried over to contemporary writings, it would make external, non-literary standards the basis for judgment.

To some extent this is a problem that affects our approach to all fields of the arts and humanities with relation to Africa. Those who have done so much, commendably, to make aspects of the African arts known to the non-African world have been those who, to put the matter in the bluntest terms, have not themselves been humanists, nor themselves trained in the critical disciplines that permit aesthetic judgments. No one can avoid being grateful for the pioneer nature of their investigations of the African arts; nor can we be satisfied with the philosophic aesthetic which forms the basis for their choice of organization and judgment of these artifacts and the local intention that suffuses them. This has been very clear in the field of African carving. Too often the presupposition has been scientific rather than artistic. In simplistic terms, we are supposed primarily to say "Isn't that interesting," rather than "Isn't that beautiful." It is even perhaps implied that "isn't it beautiful," is only an emotive bleat of approval, without more value than a personal emotional reaction. In contrast "Isn't it interesting," shows a scientific awareness, at least in its crudest form, of the importance of the thing and the part it plays in the edifice of social ritual of the tribe. Actually "Isn't it beautiful," can rest upon just as exact and developed an intellectual training as the other and it carries with it a far more developed sensibility. However, the force of the anthropologists' position to date has been so unchallenged that while Chinese art finds its niche in the Louvre, African art is relegated to the Musee de l'Homme. African arts are artifacts and it is assumed that they have more in common with the work of the American Indians than the Asian Indians. This simple miscomprehension has coloured and distorted all except the most recent judgments about the African arts and will, if not controlled, condition our standards for judging the new literature too. The innuendo supplied by the Victorian adjective has hovered over all our judgment: Africa the "dark" continent. One could write a thesis on all the unpleasant semantic overtones that "dark" has in the European tradition. One word has decided for all practical purposes the basis for our judgment of Africa--including its arts--primitive. One does not insist that this term has to be pejorative, though it often inevitably is. But it does serve to separate our attitudes from those considered appropriate to other areas of world arts. Some areas earn respectful admiration, others, indulgent interest, as we recommend more advanced techniques. Such an attitude can be seen in many fields, whether we are considering arts or social organization. We learn from the religion of the East, despise the beliefs of Africa; find the Eastern highly spiritual the African voodoo bestiality. One only has to think of common western attitudes towards African customs such as marriage, legitimacy, tribal allegiance to see how their beliefs and traditions are found at best quaint, at worst immoral to be expunged by training in the correct European manner.

The great requirement for the proper understanding of the African arts is that we free ourselves from certain conventional assumptions. This may require not only a general change of intellectual attitude in our approach but the more immediate task of freeing these arts from the too protective embrace of the social scientists. The anthropologists may wish to use this material for their investigations and such desire is valid for their assertions can teach us all a great deal. Where one draws the line is the assumption, often regrettably made, that when we have been taught something by the anthropologist about the purpose and significance of African arts in their ceremonial function, they have done more than supply us with certain items of basic data which may, or may not, help us to comprehend the purely aesthetic significance of the thing as an art work. In the same manner biographical information, background history of the time, knowledge of pigment techniques may, but not necessarily will, make our comments upon the work of Michelangelo more substantial. They may then be more authoritative, but not essentially more profound in terms of the aesthetic critical judgment of form. In other words the old dictum of "You don't have to be a chicken to judge a good egg," applies here. If you have to be an African to judge African art, all possibility of critical activity comes to a total halt. Even though I am aware, (from reading anthropologists!), that there is a much more functional inter-relationship between African arts and their social context compared with the primarily decorative function arts play in European society, I still claim that the judgment of a work of art requires, essentially, a highly developed critical faculty and an advanced degree of trained aesthetic perception. Although these qualities may be aided by information, they are not created by such facts; any more than the most advanced chemical knowledge of fermentation processes will allow a man without a developed palate to be a judge of good wines.

If we accept the position of the anthropologist we should have to make content our primary concern in the judgment of African literature. Since content would be of a nature that was part of the experience only of those studied in African folk-lore, the literary critic could have no more to say of this than he did of the earlier vernacular literature. Indeed, if it had not been for the use of the European tongue, this would be where this literature would remain if only on grounds of linguistic ignorance. But the comparative discussion and analysis that is the basis of all arts criticism would be inevitably denied. It is this evaluation of the new literature that can be provided by the literary scholar.

Perhaps there are certain other wider aspects of African studies of the last decade or more that pave the way for these assertions. The work of men like Basil Davidson and Philip Curtin has altered our view of African history. It is no longer regarded as a mere adjunct to the colonial history of Europe which assumed the African history was as blank and unimaginable an area as the white uncharted interiors of early map makers decorated with improbable monsters. As this revolution in attitude is widely accepted we find for example that we are freed from the impossible task of seeking the outside origin of the builders of the great Zimbabwe temple ruins on the grounds that it is clearly too advanced to have been created by an indigenous African group.

One expression of our expanding interest in Africa may be measured by the fact that we are now considering the humanities at all. They tend to be a luxury of secondary concern. If we regard the African humanities, and especially the art of literature, in the light of our knowledge of other world writings we shall free ourselves from many other false attitudes to African ideas. I plead therefore that African literature in the European tongues be made the territory of the literary critic in the American academic organization. If a newer vernacular literature does develop I would still assert this idea in theory. Only the difficulty of available language, the necessity for most of us to use a translation (as we would do when attempting to read a Russian novel) would alter the basic relationship between critic and text which I am asserting here. I stake out this area for English departments! What happens however if we make this writing the province of this intellectual field of English literature?

The second possibility for a critical standard is to measure this work against other publications in English. There are several aspects of African writing which justify our argument for such an approach. We have to consider fully the all-important question of audience.

Firstly, it must be realized that this work is almost entirely published in London. There are very few publication resources in Africa and those are of the smallest nature--the sources of the famous Onitsha market pamphlets for example. With the best intentions in the world and with hopes and plans for African sales, the English publishers must consider their widest possible market. Those that have effective African outlets usually find that the only extensive and profitable sales are those of text books. This may be the one area that might pay for its publication costs by purely local sales. For the present--and this may hopefully be only a temporary stage--both writers and publishers must have some thought of a dual market and the double appeal that a book will be required to have for successfully profitable production. Bluntly, even if English prices are lower than American, how many $3.95 first novels are going to sell in Africa?

There are several effects derived from this fact, though some of these may be offset by the generosity of a publisher or by considerations of policy and prestige which make him willing to publish at a loss. An African writer first submits his book to an English publisher for consideration. What do this man's professional readers look for in assessing its value to the publisher? Will they do not tend to look for the exotic, the unusual; descriptions and attitudes that in some ways confirm the prejudices that Europeans have of darkest Africa? (This is what indignant Nigerian intellectuals argue about the publication, uncorrected, of the unjustly despised stories of Amos Tutuola). Is it not remotely possible that an African writer, wanting publication, knowing it will be in England, will slant his story with this foreign audience in mind? Bruce Atkinson in his little advisory volume (published in London!) Fiction Writing for West Africans expresses this situation so that all embryonic writers will realize the difference between their position and that of many other authors. "Although your writing will be about West Africa it will not be written primarily for West Africa." This important fact colours our whole attempt to create appropriate critical standards. At some stage we may be able to forge separate standards; now there are many elements that invite us to consider ourselves as the primary audience and the literature as subject only to our critical tradition. This has a doubly bad effect. We cannot, ultimately, be assured that the writer is only bound by this audience concept, and in missing many aspects of his intention we may judge his writing as merely bad English instead of adequate African. Actually such writing is sometimes "bad English" in this sense and it leads to the disagreeably racist position that such literature cannot be judged by the standards appropriate to an "advanced" literature; and that this writing needs the ugly protective attitude implied by "An interesting book considering it is by an African."--a variant of Dr. Johnson's woman preaching judgment.

Nevertheless, with these structures and qualifications in mind there is considerable evidence that the writer intends his novel to be read internationally and if such is his intention he must abide by the standards that such distribution invites. Who is the audience for this new writing? I suggest that this question may be resolved from within the books themselves as much as from the audited accounts of the British publisher's records.

Chinua Achebe has insisted urgently and regularly that he is concerned only with a local and African audience. His argument, with reference to his own enormous African sales figures, is, I believe, an ingenuous one. What happens for Mr. Achebe does not happen characteristically with other African writers. His novels owe their large printings and sales to the fact that his books are widely utilized as a set text in secondary schools. His novels with their almost Victorian "high seriousness" of theme, their highly orthodox characterization and development, lend themselves peculiarly to this purpose. In this regard I might mention an incident, for it was the sad lament of a London publisher which illuminated this situation for me. Envious of the success of Heinemann's African Writer's Series (and how gratifying it is when a missionary endeavour also pays off in hard cash!) he decided to attempt a similar project in the English-speaking areas of the Caribbean with which his firm had closer contacts. Reading the available West Indian novels, he discovered to his dismay that there wasn't one that would be acceptable for school use. All had their share of cheerfully lusty exuberance and bucolic adventures that curriculum supervisors are apt to consider shockingly inappropriate for classroom reading. This suggests that big sales in schools may be a measure of something other than a wide popular reading public and I suspect that the true relationship of sales and markets would be found more accurately in the publication of the novels of such a writer as Nzekwu. His may be more nearly an average success than the sensational achievement of Achebe.

Perhaps the works of Nzekwu might be used to illuminate the whole issue of audience so vital to critical standards. If his novels expose the problems in their most exaggerated form, perhaps this excess will simply allow us to isolate certain factors in the relationship between writer and reader and hence the critical attitudes it is appropriate for us to take.

Onuora Nzekwu has written two novels to date, Wand of Noble Wood and Blade Among the Boys. I happen to know that the first was actually conceived as a piece of anthropology, but since they are both presented to us as novels we may properly regard them as works of creative writing. One's first reaction to these books is likely to be concern at the inordinate amount of information they contain about tribal custom; bride price and religious ritual. It is clear that it is expected that this will be new and informative to the reader--this means that it expressly denies any audience to whom such information would be well-known; specifically an African one. To some extent in the writing between different cultures, especially highly differentiated ones, we shall always need explication, since we shall be unfamiliar with the writer's culture and our concern is likely to be focused on the quantity of such details and how subtly they are incorporated into the structure of the novel. Achebe, always a skillful writer, has to give us a good deal of information about the all but sacred yam in Arrow of God. He tells us of the ritual of planting and harvest but in such a way that the facts are not only woven within the structure of the story but are only introduced because they play a significant part in the motivation of the events of the protagonist's life. Other writers such as Nkem Nwanko and Ike abdicate this necessity by the transparent device of a series of notes and a vocabulary at the end of their novels for outside readers.

Professor Eldred Jones, with whom I once debated this question, made the interesting remark that this reaction was more widespread than I allowed; that a West African would read C. P. Snow's Cambridge novels as anthropology. It makes a good "bon mot" but I doubt whether such an attitude is identical as critical justification. Snow creates the Cambridge scene in detail so that he can show the background and setting which impose especial pressures on the characters. In a similar way the South African writer Dan Jacobson creates the local scene with minute skill. It is not that his characters are only South African, but in this setting of unique stress in social and political pressure their acts become heightened, their normal tensions exaggerated. The danger, exemplified by Nzekwu's novels, is that the characters may exist largely in order to expose the details of their unusual background, not as human things.

From the standpoint of the critic it is important, above all, to see what effect this exterior audience will have on the complicated infra-structure between writer and reader, for the sense of an external audience robs the author to some degree of his omniscient status which derives from his position as intermediary between characters and readers. We find it a constant irritation in Dicken's novels for example, when the usually detached author elbows his way into a paragraph to make sure, with gratuitous comments, that we understand the emotional tone he has intended to create. The characteristics I am indicating is not the use of the "I" form viewer which is simply the author acting as his readers' eyes within the story instead of exterior to it. Rather, there is evidence that in African novels the writer finds himself, of necessity, siding with his characters to the exclusion of his audience, since he will be able to identify, culturally, with his characters more naturally than with his audience. This unusual identification is the structural basis of all the information that is offered us in such novels. If the characters use a "we" they deliberately imply a "you" from whom such first person experience is separated. Consider who is assumed to be the audience for the dozens of occasions when the author uses his possessives like this:

> "It was a saying amongst us . . . "
>
> "My people believe that . . . "
>
> "She was a good soloist by our standards."
>
> "By our local calendar . . . "

Sometimes this exclusion narrows to the point where it is actually tribal, rather than national. Then even Africans need this assistance. A Yoruba in the novel receives information because "he" did not understand what was obvious "for those who know."

This assumption of the audience's need for information shows not only in the language--though this may expose the whole issue--but also in the whole structure of the plots. Characters are given acts that allow details of custom to be presented. There are various somewhat spurious disguises for this purpose. There is the casual introductory comment like "as perhaps you may know. . ." or a much longer episode like the entire chapter of Wand of Noble Wood that informs us about bride price. Here a West Indian--a foreigner to allow audience identification one notes--is brought in to demand information about this local custom. At each hesitation in the flow of fact, she urges the speaker on with encouraging words such as "curiosity compels me to ask."

The question of intended audience seems to me fundamental as a basis for our decision as to the proper quality of our critical judgment. If the audience was completely or even primarily African we should have to find out what the appropriate African standards would be for critical judgment. If the audience is, as one must assume after my argument above, abroad, then are we not entitled to approach this writing with the critical tools acknowledged by that audience? Do not the writers have the primary obligation to stand by the judgment assessed by the readers to whom they have admittedly addressed themselves? And this readership is an English and American one in the first case.

Let us take this explanation as a working hypothesis and with the critical tools that we would employ upon any other new novel directed at our attention, let us examine a couple of African novels--as if, in fact, they were not African at all.

The fundamental fact of this literature is that it is a second-language literature. However fluent, however exact and natural the writer's English may appear to be, it will not be the same English that is used by those for whom the language is the mother tongue. Nuances, semantic overtones, the speed of cultural linguistic change, the passing of words from fashion to cliche, sensitivity to the implications of idiom, all these things will differ between societies and the African writer will be pivoted between two such judgments. One will be that appropriate to the English of his own society; the other will be based on the language appropriate in the society where a significant part of his audience lives.

To reiterate: where there is identification of cultural baskground between writer and audience, there are no difficulties; his assumptions, cultural and linguistic, are theirs. Where this condition is the result of translation, the problem is solely a professional and technical one for the translator--how does he best render the exact nuance of the author's language to his international audience. This latter is anyway a problem that has been minimized by the fact that a high proportion of translation, for literary purposes at least, has been between similar cultures. Predominantly translation into English is of the most significant novels of Europe, where in spite of differences of national culture, there is some rough similarity of attitude which may roughly be called "European" or "Western." With African writing the problem is unique and compounded two ways. The author is dealing with a culture that is totally dissimilar and he does not have the services of a translator. He uses directly the language of his international readers but in a way that they will often find strange and unattractive.

Let me be more specific. At the climax of Wand of Noble Wood, the hero, Peter, snarls, in all apparent seriousness that he will revenge himself on his enemy. "Teach the blighter a lesson" are the words he uses. Now this, I submit, can no longer be said in English seriously. It becomes caricature. Ian Hay might have employed it once but that was thirty years ago and even at that time Noel Coward would have thought it comic. The significance of such a point is that there is a difference between the intention of the writer and response of the reader that utterly destroys the effect intended. Nzekwu assumes we will be impressed with this expression of the hero's rage; we merely giggle. Would, however, an African giggle or would this be acceptable in context? That is the question we must constantly face.

A similar example. When returning home the hero Peter expresses his sentiment with the poetic reflection of "Mid pleasures and mid palaces, there's no place like home." Now in England this quotation has become so hackneyed that it can only be used ironically; it is merely a joke. But there is no evidence that either Nzekwu or his character feels this. This is not a "characterizing" remark, there is too much evidence of identification between author and character for that.

There is also a similar reaction gained from some of Ekwensi's pages. His first novel People of the City has a series of cliches littering its pages. "He pinched himself." "He was not dreaming." "Things looked black." "It was a bit fishy." "There was evidence of foul play." Is this mere carelessness on the part of the writer? We are all lamentably prone to indulge in the cliche. Or is it, in fact, a lack of recognition? Does it suggest that a phrase that in England has been overworked to the point of becoming cliche has still enough apparent novelty to retain effectiveness in a society where it is less well known? After all a cliche is only a good phrase used excessively; that is why it is so popular. When does such a phrase become indefensibly "stock?"

Besides this question of dated diction there is the equal dating of culture tone, quite literally, I suspect, a time lag. When were girls last found, in England, "devilishly attractive?" 1910? There is an old family retainer figure in the person of the servant Sam. On receiving a quite casual kindness Sam says, "Thank you madam and God bless you." That is surely Dickens. The climax of this book has a splendid arrest scene that might have been taken direct from Sherlock Holmes.

> The game was up. The robbers were challenged. Handcuffs glinted in the moonlight, snapped on their wrists. They were led away.

Later the police announce, "We've had our eye on him for some time. He hasn't escaped us this time." Part of the reason for this is to be traced to the West African schools where students are fed a disproportionate amount of the more florid type of Victorian prose and encouraged to emulate some of its more verbose and pretentious features as examples of heightened purple quality. For all I know this may be entirely satisfactory to the African. Satisfactory I define here, as having the same effect on audience as the author's intention --the definition of all adequate styles. If it does satisfy African readers, then again only by falling back upon the question of who is the primary audience addressed, can we defend pointing out critically the gross inflation of this style. In passing I might recall the plot of one of the more famous

Onitsha novels, that popular market pamphlet series that please the unsophisticated taste. Here an illiterate chief concerned that his daughter wants to marry a teacher, hires Bomber, a man capable of using such impressive polysyllabic gobbledegook that he"bombs" his audience into admiring and silent admission! Is this Nzekwu's intention in lines like:

> What is civilization but silver gilt savagery. Is it not a vain glory which like the sun rises but to sink and leaves the sky more dark? Where is the Egyptian civilization? Where is the Hellenic civilization? Where is the Roman civilization?

Now it does not really require identification as African English or English of any other nationality to see this as supremely false writing. Equally when Nzekwu writes at his best it does not appear to have very definite national overtones. Here is an example of his sinewy controlled tone, an excellent example of the colloquial modern style.

> I had often thought about marriage, sometimes seriously but more often casually. There were moments during the past years when I had almost promised myself I was going to start searching for a wife, but I never did.

With prose style like this it is easy to set an author into a worthy place in any assessment of contemporary writing in English. Early examples could only be defensible by a belligerent appeal to African usage.

My argument has been in this section that the novel form is close to the European tradition and sometimes the worse for that. There is however, a very significant development recently introduced by the first novel of Gabriel Okara The Voice. No one can yet say to what extent this will become a significant new departure, or how much it will prove to be a little like Joyce's Finnegan's Wake; a bravura performance that will remain impressive but probably terminal; a literary example of a Darwinian sport.

This novel is pretended to be a new amalgam between the African and the European traditions obtained by a melding of their language. I say pretended because I suspect it is much more conscious than is openly admitted. The style is supposed to be virtually a direct translation from Okara's Ijaw vernacular. This, it is felt, allows the use of English, but an English so highly modified and coloured that is suggests rather the vernacular behind it, than the qualities of the English tongue that it borrows. Some of the sections from this book seem highly charged poetry, other parts read like too literal translations from German. Consider:

> Thus Okolo remembered the spoken words that from this policeman's mouth came out. Then opposite him sat a black coat wearing man with his head nodding, nodding . . . Okolo at the nodding, nodding head looked and the man's spoken words stirred in his inside.

What is the basis of this diction with its unexpected inversions, repetitions and parallelisms? If, as I believe, (and it is a view that would be in keeping with a knowledge of Okara's poetic skill), it is a serious of subtle devices, it would be amenable to the kind of reactions given to any unusual metaphoric and symbolic use of language. Or is this a first piece of evidence that the ultimate African ideal is to construct an English leaning so heavily upon local vernaculars that it will be all but unintelligible to the outsiders and thus beyond the range of perception of the English literary critic? Can we expect such experiments based on other tribal languages, or is this evidence of the poetic suitability of one tongue? To leave you speculating upon this point here is a further example.

> The engine canoe against the strong water pushed and slowly slowly it walked along the wide river with the tall iroko trees, kapok trees, palm trees standing on its banks, the sky's eye reaching . . . . Soon the day's eye became bad. It became so bad and black and closed that it could not be looked at

This fascinating book focusses all the questions likely to be posed. A critic reading such diction must bear in mind that this is a variant of another language other than English and one that he is most unlikely to know. Can he judge it as highly suggestive and evocative English metaphor whatever the author's avowed intent or source? Or is there any justice in saying, like the New Statesman reviewer, this is just doggeral created by the linguistic crudities of a too close mental translation. Perhaps an analogy with the Irish dramatist Synge might bring some illumination here. We know that Synge left Paris at the behest of W. B. Yeats to go and live among the fisher folk of the Arran Islands; that the language he heard there coloured all his dramatic speeches. The net result however that sounds like the poetic and picturesque speech of the Irish peasantry isn't, in fact, the least like the words that would be recorded from that source on a tape recorder. It is rather the speech that, in a moment of our dramatic "willing suspension of disbelief" we are prepared to admit sounds like such men. Isn't this perhaps what the African writers may be moving towards? To create a vernacular prose that is effective English but which conveys the African tone and idiom.

Our criticial approach to the novel then must consider the situation now even though it may be only a temporary one. The aim and intention of the novelists to date have taken cognisence of the fact of an external international audience. They have employed the novel form with little modification and drawn upon stylistic influences as wide-ranging as Dickens and Mickey Spillane. Such works can legitimately be judged in the English context and often must be judged with an appropriate harshness; that they fail to achieve the degree of convincingness demanded by an external audience. Although there may be some significant overtones that we are missing as we read such works it seems unlikely that deficiencies in our knowledge of social custom requires us to undertake significantly differing treatment than that we give to a novel about some social area of this country with which we are unfamiliar. Any novelist has to build up the cultural context of his characters' lives and must convince us of their validity. Although such a work as The Voice is as yet isolated, it may conceivably be a significant new phenomenon paving the way for an approach to the literary English diction of Africa that will require we readjust any assumptions we may hold that we can read such books as if they were merely first language novels.

It has been noticed that the novel is the one literary genre that has no African antecedent even remotely equivalent. The situation may be somewhat different with poetry where there is a traditional African form. Perhaps it will be in poetry that we can begin to forge a critical standard that brings together both the two traditions; from Europe and from Africa. In poetry these two continents meet in the background memory of the writers. This duality may be readily indicated perhaps in two very different quotations. There is Gabriel Okara's line in which he exposes the dual impacts of the two contrasting traditions upon his world. He finds himself lost between the rhythm "of jungle drums and the concerto." Similar evidence is found in the Overture of Heavensgate by Christopher Okigbo. He begins with an evocation purely African,

Before you, mother Idoto, naked I stand.

But then within a few lines his invocation takes on a Christian quality:

watchman for the watchword at heavensgate;
out of the depths my cry give ear and hearken.

Perhaps we can best establish this dualism, and see its significance in the creation of an aesthetic by going more deeply and extensively into the work of a single poet. From the details thus demonstrated we may be able to create substantiated generalizations. I have chosen for this discussion the poetry of John Pepper Clark. This Nigerian poet is not only most readily and substantially available--Longman's are just about to publish in London the first English collection of a single African poet--but he may well be not only the best African poet but perhaps one of the major contemporary poets writing in English today.

Let us begin to look at his poetry with a critical approach derived from a normal professional knowledge of modern English poetry. The first thing one notices is that Clark has incorporated a series of techniques and styles from important British poets. Sometimes this is deliberate; a simple demonstration of a skill with a borrowed idiom, the kind of exploration made by a painter. Typical is his well-known poem modelled on Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Ama are you gall bitter pent?" Lines like those that follow show the Hopkins' style; the repetitions, the aliterations the sprung-rhythm emphasis.

Of course you are sick, soulful sick
Of stench carrion thick;
Worse would worst live on loan
As were best off left alone.

But this Hopkins influence is just as evident in both themes and style in Clark's original sonnet "Of Faith."

Oh, the giant mind, daemon-possessed of main
To deep-delve bowels, sound, probe the stress
Beyond speech or beach, shall not fear, less
For ease, at noon tide follow flight of crane:

Sometimes there are other echoes. There is the sound of Dylan Thomas' rumbling syllables in the early lines of Clark's most famous poem "Night Rain."

What time of night it is
I do not know
Except that like some fish
Doped out of the deep
I have bobbed up bellywise
From streams of sleep.

Both the language and the Olympian anger of Yeats throb through Clark's lyric "Why Should I Rage."

Why should I rage that
The fire I strove with fame
To light in your heart
Has not come to flame.

Is not the shadow of Maud Gonne fluttering near? And his long poem "Ivbie" owes something to T. S. Eliot with its deliberate mixture of prosaic and exotic, the Sweeney-like caricature of "Sweet Mrs. Gamp" and the stressed language of lines like:

An unlaid ghost
Has come into the village
Tonight out of the coast.

Now clearly the basis set up for the judgment of this poetry cannot be completely African. We are forced to consider the demonstrable fact that Clark is drawing upon the whole tradition of twentieth century poetry in English. This assertion can be made with just as much force if I had chosen to take the poetry of Christopher Okigbo as typical though there I should have had to emphasize the influence of Ezra Pound more than that of Hopkins. Without an extensive knowledge of contemporary English poetry much of the effect of this verse would be lost. Deliberate echoes are a most significant part of modern verse. One might cite the extraordinary compression of ideas achieved by T. S. Eliot in the last ten lines or so of The Waste Land. What a fearsome demand for literary study is made by the notes explaining the references brought to our attention there!

This is not to say of course that an African would not understand the verse of J. P. Clark but that much of its effect would be lost if the reader was not aware of what is, in effect, an alien tradition from another continent. Some of its elements then are primarily European. Equally there are qualities that are clearly and entirely African. Take the titles alone. "Abiku." What does this mean until we get to the notes at the back of the collection? What distinguishes "Fulani Cattle" and an "Agbor Dancer?" What occasioned the "Imprisonment of Obstala?" And from that latter poem what do we see as "stick insects" if we are unable to visualize those brittle boned African insects, nor have seen Miss Suzanne Wenger's attractive batik prints. But just when we are dismayed at being unable to identify "Olumo Rock" we find a more familiar figure.

But cursed my heart, that stubborn
As Joan's yearns but wouldn't burn.

Here the Catholic saint meets the African poet in the kind of identification that brings together disparate cultures united within an attitude.

The question to be asked by the critic who approaches those poems is what information does one need to make them firstly intelligible, secondly personally vital. The first aspect requires that some items of information about Africa be given before comprehension can begin. The second is the point where personal experience begins to be compared with the situation that has provoked the lines of the poet and our sense of recognition, of identification with his theme and emotion. It is in the balance between these two aspects of a critical response that we will affirm the nature of our judgment of this writing. If the African element is all important; we go humbly to the anthropologist for enlightenment. If the personal identification is strong we are establishing a hypothesis about the international availability of good poetry to the enlightened intelligence.

It soon becomes clear, I think, as one reads the poems of Clark that the African information is not, at the obvious level, a very significant part of the problem in making a sensitive and just evaluation. The scene may be African; the emotions may not be so qualified by their connection with that continent. Consider Clark's beautifully lyric poem entitled "Girl Bathing." It has a universal sensuality in the tenderness of the response it evokes from the reader. The only African word in the poem is the vegetable she is carrying, "her basket of cassava." In other ways it could be any attractive woman bathing in any place. The evocative description recalls Stephen Dedalus being provoked into the discovery of sensuous passion as he witnesses a girl wading in the sea in James Joyce's Portrait of an Artist.

> She wades gingerly up to her high
> Girdled hips, her underskirt lapping her thigh
> Like sheaves of corn.

Can any subject have more immediate delight to a male poet or reader? Does the African nationality of this girl colour the response or alter our reaction in any preceptible way?

Perhaps I can best establish my argument by looking closely at a single poem which has very strong African elements in its theme, "Abiku"

> Coming and going these several seasons,
> Do stay out on the baobab tree,
> Follow where you please your kindred spirits
> If indoors is not enough for you.
> True, it leaks through the thatch
> When floods brim the banks,
> And the bats and the owls
> Often tear in at night through the eaves,
> And at harmattan, the bamboo walls
> Are ready tinder for the fire
> That dries the fresh fish up on the wrack.
> Still, it's been the healthy stock
> To several fingers, to many more will be
> Who reach to the sun.
> No longer then bestride the threshold

But step in and stay
For good. We know the knife scars
Serrating down your back and front
Like beak of the sword fish,
And both your ears, notched
As a bondsman to this house,
Are all relics of your first comings.
Then step in, step in and stay
For her body is tired,
Tired, her milk is going sour
Where many more mouths gladden the heart.

This could hardly be, in one sense, a more African poem. By that I mean one that describes an incident that has no obvious European connection. But nominally the outside critic would not have a great deal of difficulty in the first stage of comprehension. "Baobab trees" and "harmattan" yield to a cursory dictionary examination, and "abiku" is clarified by the notes. Further outside reading would settle the significance of the knife scars on the back. But when one has this information, although one may still be a good way from comprehending the significance of "abiku" in Nigerian tradition, one can begin to approach this poem. One soon observes that the predominating aspect of this poem as poem, is the tone and this is an aspect which is significant in all literary studies. Beautifully this poem covers a whole range of emotional feeling. It creates a special kind of tenderness tinged, a little, with the wry sadness of memory. There is the diffident, half-pretended depreciation of the house that is offered the child with its "leaks through the thatch." There is the encouraging, again part-pretended cheer of "Still it's been the healthy stock." That word "still" alone is evidence of what the poet is achieving; the typically understated conversational tone that deliberately and paradoxically expresses the urgency of the concern; the intense but subdued feeling that absorbs us in this poem. The tone includes the easy colloquialism of lines which might well be addressed to a diffident but desired guest.

No longer then bestride the threshold
But step in and stay,
For good.

The tone impact derives from the casual addition of "then" interposed, and the afterthought line separation of the "for good." This is one extreme. But against this can be set the feeling at the climax of this poem when the poet has come to a more open expression of the tenderness and intensity of his feeling. After the repeated "Step in, step in," which is similar in tone to the earlier jocular remarks the response becomes openly moving and direct.

For her body is tired
Tired, her milk going sour
Where many more mouths gladden the heart.

Here no device shadows the intimate sympathy the poet feelingly exposes.

Clearly the effectiveness of this poem lies not only, or even primarily, in its description of the African scene; vividly as that is evoked. Nor does it rest upon the information we derive of the African attitude to the still-born child. It is the tone that makes this poem memorable for it makes its point with that inner, mood-tension that is characteristic of metaphysical poetry in English; the simultaneous seriousness of emotional feeling concealed by its balance with the apparent lightness of external attitude. By such a device the mood is protected and reinforced by its ironic and wry tone. By this method the poet achieves a more serious audience response than he would do if his emotion was less obliquely described. With direct feelings throughout we would negate its seriousness somewhat for we are very ready to belittle excess in our understated age that suspects feeling and feels the sentimental is emotionally self-indulgent.

If I have stressed this at great length it is to assert a critical belief. In this very African poem Clark has communicated to us his emotion towards a child about to be born. It is not necessary that we know the precise motivation for his mood nor, though this is more dangerous an assertion, it may not be necessary for us to even know the significance of "Abiku"--"child of the spirits." It is not even required that we learn much of the apparently urgent desire for the child in the African social context--the shame and horror that extends to a barren wife--a theme that Clark has argued dramatically in his play Song of a Goat. Rather in tone and theme this poem is universal. Any mother could appreciate the despair at losing a child; the spiritual pain at the memory of past disastrous miscarriages. Any poet so deeply concerned personally in such a situation would find his own emotional tone to set out his intensity of feeling in poetry. A modern poet achieves this intensity. He exposes emotion by playing at emotionless unconcern; a pose that conceals, only to support and expose all intense feeling. This African poem is humane and familiar and because of this its feeling is available to all who read it sympathetically.

If my argument has any true validity it is the essential one that brings us again to the heart of the purpose for convening this meeting. If we are to consider this new example of creative writing from Africa from the viewpoint of the American educational system we may be called upon to say where it should go in the structure of academic departmentalism and why it should be the concern of one section of the syllabus. The purpose of my paper has been to urge very strongly that this new area of writing holds the same position in relation to the general field of literature that African history does to historical studies. The same tools, the same scholastic techniques, the same capacity for scholarly evaluation and knowledge will apply in the area of Africa as they do in any other. This literature is the concern of the departments of English, it belongs to that discipline. I say this not with the intention of staking out an enlarged empire but in order to assert the truly appropriate response to this literature. It may be that we shall need the pressure exerted by African studes Centers in order to demand that this literature be included as a legitimate branch of study--departments of English are notoriously conservative, it took until thirty years ago for American literature to be recognized as an acceptable academic area--but that is merely a technical problem, not an intellectual one. Where this writing is not the concern of students of literature it ceases to be literature. Literary standards must come first as they do whether we consider the epics of Homer, the novels of Tolstoy or the essays of Bacon. If we choose to make analogies between African drama and the beginnings of Greek dramatic form; that arise out of the social ritual of danced celebration; well and good. Equally beyond this fact is the question of the play itself. This is where we approach literature.

Literature, Let us conclude on that all encompassing and humane word. This paper is simply another assertion that in our curricula and in our lives this humane study should be available to us all. That it is now coming from Africa is only a further assertion of the universal humanism of mankind.

Discussion

Colburn: As an artistic director, my approach to producing Soyinka was similar to my approach to producing Shakespeare; both require a little research.

Povey: I agree that the more background that is considered, the more likely it is that the writing will be illuminated, but no individual will ever be able to be aware of the totality of a work of art.

Lienhardt: What do African authors feel about their vernaculars? I believe that Soyinka, Pepper Clark, and Abrahams set great store by them.

Povey: If these authors wrote in the vernacular, it would be a different problem. I am concerned with the Africanization of English. If English becomes national enough, it will be difficult to say what is "good English," since what we consider bad English may be good Nigerian English.

Snyder: I think that you may be minimizing the importance of background for literary perspective. For example, to understand Sartre's The Flies as more than a modern version of the Orestes myth, it is necessary to know post-World War II France.

Guthrie: Is availability an advantage to the critic, and what is the premium placed by critics on the author's intentions?

Figueroa: A writer's stated intentions cannot be trusted. Ekwensi's statements about his novel are not as significant as the fact that he wrote in English, even though it cost him great difficulty, and though his vernacular means a great deal to him. There is a great difference between treating a work of literature as a work of literature, and using it as evidence of something else. Both procedures are valid, but they must be kept distinct.

Jordan: What about White English-speaking writers who write in Africa?

Povey: In general, there is a great difference between writing in a first language and writing in a second, although there are exceptions such as Joseph Conrad.

Arnott: What is the relationship between the novel and society? And, second, does the novel's accuracy in reflecting that society have any relevance for the critic? Ekwensi's novel, Burning Grass can be cited here as an inaccurate portrayal of Fulani society.

Povey: The problem here is that the reader may not always be aware of the significance of "inaccurate" events in the novel, if he does not have the cultural background. The reader of Things Fall Apart may not appreciate the suicide at the end, if he is without this knowledge.

Snyder: This was a unique situation. Often background is private and unique, rather than truly cultural.

Povey: Yes. To some extent every novel takes one outside one's own subculture or culture.

The Teaching of Modern African Literature
Written in a Western Language

Emile Snyder

My task, as I understand it, is to raise questions concerning the teaching, in an American university, of modern African literature written in a Western language, generally French or English. Hence, the aim of this paper--a pilot paper on the subject, I believe--will not be to speak of African literature in a scholarly sense--as my colleagues and I are called upon to do at various professional meetings--but to bring forth questions of a pedagogical nature involving the teaching of that literature. I am aware that I shall probably raise more questions than provide answers, but I think it inherent to my task to open up avenues of discussion for our future meeting at Northwestern University.

Although this paper is of a pedagogical nature, I do not consider my task any less meaningful than if it had been that of defining African literature or of analyzing a body of African literary work. Why this consideration? Modern African literature as a field of study is extremely new. Some critics have accused us--wrongly, it seems to me--of having invented a field which is non-existent. There are also few teaching in this literary field, and these few hardly know of each other. For this reason there is little agreement as to what constitutes modern African literature. Thus, a "business" paper on the subject should help us to comprehend our opinions, to formulate our objectives, and to raise important questions concerning the teaching of this literature.

In order to situate my own position let me begin by briefly outlining our African program at the University of Wisconsin. The outline concerns only those facts pertinent to literature. Our department is comprised of Professors Lyndon Harries (Swahili), A. C. Jordan (Xosa), and myself (Literature in a Western Language). The department contains an African Studies Program which permits students in other departments--mainly history, anthropology, political science, economics--to minor in an area of African study. Thus, a large number of the students attending my modern literature classes and seminars are students working for a Ph.D. in a non-literary field in another department, and are studying languages (vernacular) and literature (traditional, oral, and modern) as part of their interest in Africa and their desire for future field research in Africa.

This paper will approach the teaching of modern African literature in a Western language first in terms of the students, and secondly, in terms of the professors teaching the courses.

I

Questions Concerning the Students:

What kinds of students enroll in a course on modern African literature? What is their previous academic preparation? Their objectives? What can be expected or demanded of them?

There are a few students working specifically for a Ph.D. in African languages and literature. These students are involved in an intensive study of two vernaculars, in linguistics, and in the field of modern African literature. They are also taking courses in other areas such as African history, anthropology, Arabic, etc.

Except for such students, the classes are generally made up of students working for a Ph.D. in another department with Africa as an area of specialization. These students take the survey course in modern African literature and language courses.

The students working for a Ph.D. in African languages and literature are generally well-grounded in the basic literary concepts, in the knowledge of at least one European literary tradition--usually French or English--in aesthetics, and philosophy. This background affords the students a decisive advantage in comprehending modern African literature. However, this background can create "subtle" problems for the students. Students highly trained in modern European literatures have a tendency to relate every aspect of modern African literature to European and Western standards. The frequently derivative aspects of African literature written in English or French may be what strike the students first. It is a fact that modern African writers--especially the poets--who are educated principally in European universities, are--in the words of our colleague Professor John Povey at UCLA--"very sophisticated men, often read in English studies at universities (the same can be said of French African writers in regards to French universities). Their subjects are African and their experience is African but their language and technique demonstrate another source of influence."

In the Freetown Conference of April 1963, Gerald Moore cautioned us on the danger in attempting to connect the vernacular of the poet with his literary usage of English. Speaking on African poetry being written in English, he concluded that "whichever vernacular the poet uses he will find that he has to abandon virtually the whole of his vernacular music and rhythm and find a new music if he wants to write in English. Even if he wants to translate his poetry from the vernacular original he has to do this. In order to write in English, I think, he must respect the genius of the English language and the tradition of English writing."

However, Moore and many of us also believe that within this rule of respect there are ways in which the African writer may not only reveal his unique sensitivity as a writer, but also maintain his affinity to the African past and culture. Thus, according to Moore, "the experience, sensibility, the angle of vision will be African, but the language is English."

This African part is what most often eludes the student who is highly trained in European literatures. He has a tendency to concentrate on what is derivative; to seek the part of Eliot, or Dylan Thomas, or Shakespeare in an English African poem, or the part of Lamartine or Claudel in a French African poem. The student, in other words, gives such a derivative relationship more importance than it deserves--though, granted at one level all poets are plagiarists--and fails to respond to what is more deeply anchored in an African sensitivity. It is often the form and to what degree this form is comparable to a European form, not the affectivity of the work of art, that holds the student's attention.

Another problem arises out of their former training. Their aesthetic judgment of an African text is often too conditioned by the literary criteria they have inherited from their study of European literature. In fact, they simply transfer these same criteria to African literature. This transference may not in itself be invalid, and certainly a good case can be made for demanding of any literature a more generally acceptable level of excellence, but in the case of African literature these students are often completely oblivious to the historical and cultural conditions that may require--in relationship to this literature or even non-Western literature--a reappraisal of these criteria and a greater flexibility in their application. I do not wish to insist on this important point at this moment, since I believe it is the essence of Professor Povey's communication to this meeting. I merely wish to indicate the literary conditioning of students coming to African literature with a previous, semi-professional background in European literatures.

Now to speak of those other students who have no appreciable literary background. At best, some of them have had a minimal amount of under-graduate introductory courses in French or English, and a general survey of literature. They know next to nothing about this strange subject of literature, and have no formal notions of genres, styles, and approaches to criticism.

It is first necessary to introduce these non-literary students to the basic elements of literature, and to teach them through illustration a method of approaching a literary text, of separating the formal elements in it, and of analyzing its meaning and language. I find that a European poem, one that is relatively easily explicated, is best for this introductory work. I have often reverted, in the early classes, to a simple explication de texte, and have distributed an outline-guide to the reading of poetry, such as the one given by an English department to its incoming majors. This outline covers such points as theme, development, diction, imagery, aspects of metrics, sound effects, manner, and tone. It would be useless to indicate en passant the stylistic influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins on the early poetry of John Pepper Clark if the students could not recognize the stress difference between an iambic and an anapestic line of poetry.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty for the non-literary students lies in the fact that they have no knowledge of European literary traditions from which African writers often borrow. It seems to me impossible for students to fully comprehend the poetry of the neo-surrealist poet Aime Cesaire without some understanding of the influence of the surrealist movement on modern French poetry in general. Similarly, a knowledge of the poetry of Eliot, Dylan Thomas, or Hopkins would help the student understand at least some of the formal aspects of the poetry of John Pepper Clark or Gabriel Okara. The same argument is valid for the study of the novel; behind the novels of Camara Laye or Sembene Ousmane is the whole weight of the French and European naturalist novels of Flaubert and Zola, Gorki and Kafka.

An obvious remedy for this difficulty would be to subject the students to a series of literary survey courses offered by a French, English, or Comparative Literature department. However, we must be reasonable in our demands. The program for the graduate students in African Studies is already exacting, and it would be unrealistic to expect these students to spend at least one extra year studying European literatures. An alternative, which I have adopted, is to provide a general bibliography for outside reading, with the hope that in one semester the students may amalgamate enough "background" to make them more sensitive to readings on modern African literature. The arbitrary and difficult choice of this bibliography raises an important question for discussion. It remains doubtful to me whether Lanson's Histoire de la Litterature Francaise or Baugh's A Literary History of England, plus a few specialized studies on aspects of French and English literature, are sufficient for giving the students a workable depth of knowledge.

There is, of course, the problem of language in teaching modern French African literature. Although the classes are conducted in English--with the understanding that few students would be able to follow lectures in French--it would be preferable if the readings were done in both French and English. A reading knowledge of French can be required of the graduate students for these reasons. Ph.D. candidates are normally expected to pass a French reading examination. (It has been my experience, however, that a reading examination is no assurance that students will be able to handle later research in French, for often the examination is a formality for which the students cram one semester or a summer and promptly forget afterwards as an academic nightmare.) Secondly, the students, if only those directly involved with French-speaking West Africa, should be expected to know French as future "Africanists" in the field. Finally, there is a large body of scholarship, especially dealing with French-speaking West Africa, which has not been translated from the original French and therefore is useless to those students who have no working knowledge of the language. Even if these students do possess a reading knowledge of French and can read the works of Delafosse, Balandier, or Monteil, it is another thing to understand the poetry of Aime Cesaire or Tchikaya U'Tamsi, both of whom are either misunderstood or practically unknown to the French specialists. To use translations is self-defeating, for any discussion of style becomes suspicious when it is not founded on the original text.

It must be said that the field of modern French African literature is attracting more and more students from French departments. These students, tired of Racine or Balzac, searching for new literary heroes or virginal fields for Ph.D. dissertations (mistakenly thinking that the Ph.D. research bibliography for an African author should be sensibly slimmer than that for a French author) enroll in courses on African literature. This "branching-out" is made easier by the fact that some French departments like that at Wisconsin will, at times, agree to cross-list an African literature course if the readings are in French and to give credits to their students for the course. It must also be said, in all fairness, that many such "refugees" from French departments approach modern African literature with a spirit of discovery and eagerness. For whatever reasons these students may have in taking African literature courses, they may find themselves lost because of their inadequate backgrounds in the fields of study concerning Africa.

Besides the question of the French language, there is the matter of the general literary perspective that the non-literary students have. The students who are steeped in other disciplines, such as political science, history or anthropology, tend to approach literature from the perspective of their discipline. Although such an approach may yield interesting results, it remains that unless the students can shift to a proper literary perspective they will get a limited idea of the meanings and poetic beauty from what they read.

This question of the proper perspective and academic background brings up another important consideration. What can be expected and required of students for examinations and seminar papers? Should a teacher accept different levels of work from students in the same class who have different backgrounds and academic objectives?

There should be no problem in purely factual matters. If a clear syllabus is provided, including a bibliography and reference materials, the same amount of information should be required of all students. However, this "matching column right with column left" is a small part of a literature examination and mainly a technique for spot checking the students on their reading assiduity. The required literary essay is a different matter, for a certain literary sophistication is expected, especially in a seminar paper. The question then arises as to whether or not the teacher can excuse the lack of literary sophistication and sensitivity on the grounds that these things are irrelevant concerns to the future political scientist or economist.

I raise this point because recently a student of mine complained about my severe judgment of his seminar paper and argued in self-defence that I had expected him to perform at the same level of literary sophistication as the other students from departments in literature. He argued that his research had been ample, his ideas sound, and his presentation clear. Above all, he had sought important historical ideas and developments in the poems under analysis. The historian's argument was not specious, nor was it an attempt to rationalize his poor showing. His argument rested on the scale of values and the particular perspective of an historian. However, I can not conceive of teaching a literature course as anything other than literature, or, to put it in a negative way, of teaching the course in a manner that would be most fruitful to only the historian or the political scientist, etc. Still, we must recognize the fact that the diversity of student backgrounds and objectives makes it difficult to decide the exact level to which to "pitch" the course and what degree of performance to expect from the students.

This briefly concludes the part of this paper which deals with the students. The major problems include: the diversity of student backgrounds, language, literary criteria (which will be discussed at greater length by another colleague), and the expected level of student performance.

II

Questions Concerning the Professor:

Let met begin by saying that the professors of modern African literature belong to a very heterogeneous group. Indeed, they wonder sometimes whether they can call themselves professors of "modern African literature." Questions have been asked and heatedly debated since the initial show of interest in this new area of literary endeavor. Is there such a thing as "modern African literature?" What does it include? Most of us involved in this literature believe there is such an "area of study." However, this does not dispel the malaise, the ambiguity that hovers over this area.

This ambiguity is made more evident by the fact that most of us came to the African studies--and have become what are fashionably called "Africanists"--from other disciplines. Furthermore, we are teaching African literature under the aegis of a department of European literature which is dissociated from, if not uninterested in, the African studies and programs.

I feel extremely fortunate to completely belong by appointment as a salaried teacher to a Department of African Languages and Literature. This fact carries important psychological and practical implications. Because of my status, I am able to devote most of my time to African studies. I am teaching students who are working in an area of African study. My colleagues are men renowned in their fields. I lead my unversity life in a cultural milieu related to my teaching activities. This includes being involved with our Student Africanist Association, with debates, guest speakers from Africa, and programs of cultural exchange with Africa. I inherit from this involvement a sense of security--and let us admit it--a sense of prestige. As are my colleagues, I am expected to "pull my own weight" in my field, and I deserve their appreciation in doing so. All this creates for me a vital atmosphere in which to work.

If I have outlined my situation at Wisconsin at length and perhaps too biographically, it is because my situation is unique among professors of modern African literature. Most of my colleagues in modern African literature belong to departments which have nothing to do with Africa. Very often their opportunity to teach an African literature course represents a concession made by their department. The course (usually only one) which they teach is decidedly peripheral to the needs of the department. This means that the person teaching such a course would also be peripheral to the department if he were not connected to it in another capacity. To give a few examples: Professor El Nouty is an active member of the French Department at UCLA, Cassirer a member of the Romance Languages Department at the University of Massachusetts, and Povey a member of the English Department at UCLA. I do not mention those professors who are occasionally able to include some modern African literature in the syllabus for a modern literature course because such deviations never get published in course catalogues, and we seldom hear about it except through transfer students.

The peripheral situation of these professors raises many problems. I hestiate to bring forth some of the problems because of their delicate and personal nature. But I shall raise them here because the future development of this field is contigent on the personal situations of its professors. Because of their interests, professors, at various times, are asked by a department of modern European literature to teach a course on African literature. Such a course is to be offered under the listing of that department. There are many reasons for such a request. Graduate students have expressed an interest in this field. Secondly, it has become fashionable to be interested in African literature--the importance of the concept of Negritude is replacing that of existentialism! Finally, the department itself has shown a serious (but limited) interest in the field. In some cases, the inclusion of an African literature course may represent a defense on the part of a European language department. Because the department considers African literature as part of the larger domain of French or English literature, it wishes to exercise critical control over it. There is the example of a university where a course on modern French African literature is being taught within the French department

I do not mean to be facetious. What is implied in the above paragraph is the question of the relationship of African vernacular to the modern African literature written in a European language. The debating of this question has taken many forms. My question is in what measure would the knowledge of an African vernacular contribute to my teaching African literature written in a European language. In my opinion the answer is practically none.

It must be said, however, that such a knowledge could increase an understanding of African tradition and sensitivity. It would serve as a valuable tool to getting inside certain modern texts, especially when the author is deeply rooted in his vernacular tradition. A good knowledge of Ijaw would help one to better appreciate the tour de force of Gabriel Okara who attempts to recreate the feeling of Ijaw prose and conversation in his latest novel, The Voice. A knowledge of a Bantu language would help to better understand the modern South African writings in English as would a Guinean vernacular for Camara Laye's novels, or Wolof or Serer for Senghor's poetry.

It should, however, be also pointed out that many African writers show little vernacular influence. They are stylistically more influenced by European writers than by their own vernacular traditions. Some show little interest in the stylistic potential of the vernacular for their work written in a European language. Mr. Nicol, principal of the Fourah Bay College, is an example of a writer who does not know a single vernacular language. These writers may write in French or English because, as John Pepper Clark said, "this is the language I know best."

This penchant of African writers should not prevent them from being considered African writers, witnesses of African realities, and contributors to African culture. It forces us to recognize the essential difference between the "oral" and the "modern" traditions. The difference is that the "modern" literature we teach is a "creative" literature, while the "oral" is "functional." This "modern" literature is in the process of rapid growth, and therefore I believe that a knowledge of a vernacular is not essential to the understanding or teaching of the literature. The time spent by a teacher in learning Swahili would be better spent in studying African politics. However, if time is to be spent in learning a foreign language, it would be preferably spent increasing an elementary knowledge of Spanish in order to better read the Cuban and other Spanish Negro writers of the Caribbean. A year of concentrated study of Portuguese for one who has a prior knowledge of a Romance language would be sufficient for reading the Portuguese writings from Angola, Mozambique, and Brazil.

A distinction should be made between the teaching of modern French African literature and that of modern English African literature. In teaching a survey course in French African literature, I think it necessary to deal with the origins of the Negritude movement and of the period prior to that movement. At least one quarter of the course should be devoted to the early twentieth-century work written in French by the Negro Caribbean authors. Whether one accepts or rejects the mystical concept of Negritude, it is still a vital concept in terms of the historical role it played in the writing by the first wave of French African authors. The concept has its roots in the French Antilles and is later defined by the Franco-African intelligentsia of the Paris in the early 1940's. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the protest writing in Martinique, Haiti, and Guadeloupe before studying French-with the chairman's insistence that the course be taught only within this department, while this same university owns a first-rate African Institute. This obligatory "supervision" by another department is a serious problem.

A second problem stemming from the first is the general "delicacy" of the "Africanist's" position in a European language department. The department demands the major portion of his time, leaving him little opportunity to develop in his own field, e.g., concentration on research.

Third, the "Africanist" feels insecure in the department, for its other members tend to consider him as "excess baggage," or to ignore him, or to have a paternal attitude toward this particularly scholarly aspect of his teaching career.

Fourth, the "Africanist" needs to impress the department by having articles published on French or English literature for the sake of promotion or salary increase. His articles on African literature are generally considered as interesting sidelines but no more than that. These publications seldom enter in to the department's consideration of his future position.

Fifth, the "Africanist" finds it generally impossible to promote new courses in the African field. At the same time, he must be careful not to develop too much enthusiasm on the part of the graduate students for the course he is presently teaching. Although dissertation topics have been approved in the field of modern African literature, the department would look disfavorably upon what it might consider to be a "movement" toward that literature.

Sixth, the "Africanist" often finds it difficult to get money from the university to attend conferences concerning his field, even when he has been invited to read a paper.

In general, this is the plight of most of my colleagues. Their status in American universities and particularly in the departments of European literatures is ambiguous if not precarious.

If the situation of an "Africanist" is a delicate one in a French or English department, his position in an African department or institute may also present difficulties. In this case, however, the difficulties may be brought about by the "Africanist" himself and not by the department or institute. The strength of an African program undoubtedly rests on the teaching of the vernacular. Swahili and Xosa are offered in depth--Hausa is soon to be introduced--at Wisconsin. In my opinion, this is the life-blood of an African program. However, a professor, who does not speak a vernacular, may therefore develop a sense of inferiority, even though his colleagues have done nothing to promote this feeling. The classic question asked by students (and ladies' civic organizations) of an instructor in an African program is what African language does he speak. If one answers "none," disappointment or smirks usually follow. This is such a frequent question that one is tempted to answer anything, preferably choosing the most obscure language. If one refrains from such a show of originality, it is not only because of intellectual honesty but because the questionner will immediately challenge the professed linguistic ability.

speaking West African writers such as Senghor, Diop, Fodeba, or Laye. (The study of Lilyan Kesteloot, Les ecrivains noirs de langue francaise, Universite libre de Bruxelle, 1963, would serve as an excellent historical reference text.)

There is the question of whether a study of Negro American writers should be included in a course on modern African literature. Taking into account the tremendous and direct influence that writers such as Langston Hughes, Claude MacKay, and Jean Toomer had on Senghor, Cesaire, and Damas, it would seem advisable to devote several lectures on these authors. An example of this influence was MacKay's Banjo (translated into French in 1937) which became the "bible" for these African writers, who could quote entire pages of this novel from memory. Unfortunately, most American students are not familiar with the Negro writers of the 1930's and 1940's and they concentrate on the work of James Baldwin or Ralph Ellison. If a study is to be included it should cover more than the most recent and famous American Negro literature. (An excellent referential text is Jean Wagner's French doctoral thesis, Les poetes negres des Etats-Unis, Librarie Istra, 1962.)

Finally, there is the question of the South African works written in English. It is the question of the extent to which one should include the works of the white writers such as Alan Paton, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, Alf Warrenburg. I consider these writers, together with Peter Abrahams, Richard Rives, Exekiel Mhpahlele, and Alex La Guma, as belonging to a group of South African modern fiction writers who write in English. This grouping leads indirectly to a definition of the modern African literature written in a Western language. I am guided in my choice of authors by the resolution adopted by the Congress of Africanists in Accra. African literature was then defined as "any work in which an African setting is authentically handled, or to which the experience which originates in Africa is integral." Two other statements confirm my choice. At the closing of the Freetown Conference at Fourah Bay College in April of 1963, Dr. Davidson Nicol said, "I do not think that European writing on Africa should be completely omitted. I am inclined to divide European writing on Africa into two--those writers for whom Africa is simply the scene of a plot; and on the other side, those who are directly involved with Africa and know its background well. Among this latter group, I include people like Nadine Gordimer, Elspeth Huxley and Doris Lessing." In his introduction to Modern African Prose (Heinemann African Writer Series, 1964) Richard Rive expresses a similar attitude toward a wide definition of African literature when he says, ". . . I should like to make it clear that I am here using the term 'African' in its broadest sense. By African literature, for the purpose of this anthology, I mean literature produced by Africans (regardless of colour, language or national distinction), which deals with situations and experiences happening in the continent. I have therefore included the work of two white writers from South Africa, as I feel they must not be denied a place in the body of African literature. It is impossible to speak of African literature without recognizing Afrikaans writing in South Africa, Portuguese poetry in Mozambique or Arabic verse in Sudan."

It seems to me that some examples of Spanish Caribbean literature should be presented to the students, though in a more limited way. G. R. Coulthard's excellent study, Race and colour in Caribbean literature (Oxford University Press, 1962) contains important chapters on the "anti-slavery novel" in Cuba in the late 19th century, the later Afro-Cubism movement, and the "theme of Africa" in the Spanish-speaking West Indies. Students should be made to read passages from these novels (even if only in translation) and the poetry of Nicolas Guillen.

The question of literary merits arises from the choosing of texts. It is the question whether minor authors should be included in the study for the sake of an historical panorama. I believe this question will be dealt with at greater length by Professor Povey when he discusses the problem of establishing literary norms for modern African literature.

The business matter of ordering texts for the course can be a very frustrating experience. So far there is not a satisfactory anthology. Although the two standard anthologies of Gerald Moore and Ulli Beier, Modern Poetry from Africa (Penguin edition) and of John Reed, A Book of African Verse (Heinemann series) are good, they are inadequate for teaching. The French section in the Moore anthology is too limited and has notable omissions. These texts deal with African writers only and do not include the Caribbean authors. There is definitely a need for a comprehensive teaching manual that would include both French and English writings with notes and a bibliography. I may add that Professor Povey and myself are presently preparing such a manual. Meanwhile, however, one is forced to rely on an assortment of texts of unequal excellence which, although in paperback, total a high cost for the student. For my English African literature course this semester I had to order twelve texts which totalled close to twenty dollars. Because of the various levels of linguistic ability in my French African literature course I have, at times, been forced to rely on my own translations. This necessity either consumes my time or burdens the departmental secretaries.

There is the problem of the availability of texts. Few texts are printed in America, and most have to be ordered from France or England. We are fortunate and grateful for being able to order the extremely important MBARI publications through the Northwestern University Press which keeps these publications readily available. The French African materials usually have to be ordered through the presses of Presence Africaine, or Editions du Seuil, or Gallimard, which are all in Paris. English materials are ordered through the presses of Heinemann or Faber and Faber in London. This ordering may take considerable time because it must be done months in advance, even before there is any idea of the number of students who will be registering for the courses. Previous enrollment figures are unreliable because of the changes in student trends, e.g., the interest in "exotic" literature.

The policies of the publishing firms dealing with African literature raise certain problems. Many are cautious about the volume of works printed, and some texts are periodically out of print. We are sometimes informed only a few days before the course is to begin that a text is no longer in print. Also, a particular text may be prohibited from export to America because of a rights agreement between firms. These agreements, however, appear to be very vague. When I tried to order Camara Laye's African Child through the Fontana firm in Glasgow, the firm answered that it could not send copies to me because of American rights. But when I contacted the American firm to which I was referred, it knew nothing about the agreement or the text. I was forced to prevail upon an English friend of mine to purchase the necessary two dozen copies. In the case of the Heinemann series, many of the texts are out of print. It often happens that a text, ordered as a paperback, will arrive in hardback. Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart came in hardback at a cost of

$4.95. This involves a great deal of time when the texts must be exchanged.

As a final note on the subject of reading materials, the students should be encouraged to subscribe to some literary review which includes modern African writing and criticism. Presence Africaine (in either the French or English series) is certainly recommended. There is also Abbia which is a young, nearly bi-lingual review that comes out of Yaounde, Cameroon. Abbia, however, has a very unreliable mailing procedure and one is liable to miss a few editions. There are many journals dealing with the English area of African study. Some of them are devoted to the problems of vernacular and linguistics, but I have not found any that seem particularly interested in modern literature written in a Western language.

In general, this sums up the problems confronting the students and professors of modern African literature in a Western language. I must say again that I am aware of the unbalanced sheet of questions and answers. But I understand that the purpose of our meeting at Northwestern is to begin a working discussion of these problems among my fellow Africanists, and that the discussion is to be based on the material from our submitted papers. For the Africanists teaching in the modern field more than for anyone else the meeting will be the first occasion to exchange ideas about this new field which some still regard as an illegitimate child of European literature.

Discussion

Snyder: Let me begin with three general observations: First, African writing in Western languages must be taught with reference to English or French literary history. Second, texts originally written in French can best be taught in French, rather than in English translation. And third, as the total corpus of works is small, and as a comparison between works in French and in English can be informative, I feel that it is preferable to fuse all African writing in Western languages into one subject for study, rather than having separate courses, one for writing in French and one for writing in English.

Wershow: What about African writing in Portuguese?

Snyder: This literature should be taught. However, qualified personnel are not available. There is not, as yet, a large body of African literature, written in Portuguese, but some is available in translation; as, for example, in Gerald Moore's anthology, Modern Poetry From Africa (Penguin Books Ltd.).

Figueroa: As modern African literature in English is regarded as an offshoot of English literature, do students and teachers in this field need a background in English literature?

Snyder: This background is necessary. The crucial tactical question, however, is which department at a university is the most appropriate in which to offer courses in African literature.

Schmidt: What criteria should be used in choosing material for a course in African literature in Western languages?

Snyder: My criteria are both literary and historical.

Schmidt: What about original English material published only in German, or original Portuguese material available only in French?

Snyder: These are rare cases; it is possible to do a whole course entirely in English.

Schmidt: I have two questions: Do you use unpublished material, and, secondly, do you use material not published in the original language if it has historical interest?

Snyder: I do use unpublished material. However I do not use material not published in the original language.

Schmidt: What about the influence of German on African writing?

Snyder: There has been little influence.

Arnott: Perhaps the scholar sees in African literature only that with which he is already familiar, and when vernacular literature has been better studied, many currently unappreciated influences may become apparent.

Alexandre: The knowledge of the vernacular is relevant in the analysis of African writing at the level of dialogue.

Rouget: I disagree on that point.

Guthrie: The teacher of literature will be more familiar with those languages which he knows. The vernacular cannot be dispensed with forever.

Jordan: Does the use of dialogue really reveal the influence of the vernacular on the author, as, for example, with Alan Paton's use of Xhosa forms?

Snyder: In some cases this may be just an attempt to create atmosphere. However, in Okara's *The Voice*, for example, a real attempt to recreate the rhythms of Ijaw prose is made.

Guthrie: The influence of the vernacular on African writing is certainly a matter for investigation.

MODERN AFRICAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

J. A. Ramsaran

It is evident that the study of recent literature, largely deriving from the sub-Saharan area, is becoming an important aspect of African programs. How far this literature can truly and meaningfully be integrated into undergraduate and graduate courses oriented towards African studies depends upon the aims and purposes of such programs, as well as upon the suitability of the literary material available.[1]

The purpose of most African programs in the university, it may safely be assumed, is to study the culture of some particular segment, or segments, of the Continent with the aim of understanding the history, evolution, and the general future direction of that culture. All that contributes to the pattern of the physical and mental life of the individual and the society in which he moves, is the definition of culture for the present purpose. And since modern African writing in English touches most aspects of African life and institutions, it provides very useful and interesting material for cultural studies in the form of documentary, creative, and critical works. These may be broadly grouped as translations and original writings in English.

At first sight translation may not appear of much significance in recent African writing, but they are likely to play a more vital part in the shaping of literature in the future than may be anticipated at present. Unwritten oral forms of cultural expression like tales, legends, songs and myths, translated into English will exert greater influence on the novels, dramas, and poems of African authors and possibly others, as readers everywhere become familiarized with these oral expressions of African culture. Apart from this conjecture, there is no denying the fact that the basic oral literature of any largely non-literate society is indispensable to a study of its culture. And this literature for the majority of students engaged in courses of African programs must of necessity be read in translation, no matter how desirable it is to be able to come into direct contact with it in the African vernacular.

Of documentary works in translation outstanding examples are Akiga's Story[2] and Baba of Karo[3] which give vivid accounts of Nigerian tribal life, the former incorporating heroic legends of the Tivs and giving fascinating glimpses of their social customs and rituals. Another classic comes from East Africa in the form of Mwana Kupona's Advice on Wifely Duty.[4] All these have been translated by non-Africans. It is to be hoped that Africans themselves will be impelled, by the intrinsic worth and literary quality of comparable works known to them in the vernacular, to translate them into English for a wider public in their own country and abroad.

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[1] See J. A. Ramsaran, New Approaches to African Literature (Ibadan U.P., Ibadan, 1965), for comprehensive reading lists.

[2] Benjamin Akiga, Akiga's Story, R. M. East (Ed.), (London, 1939).

[3] Mary F. Smith, Baba of Karo (London, 1954).

[4] W. Hichens (ed.), Kupona Bint Msham (The Advice of Mwana Kupona Upon Wifely Duty) (Medstead, Hampshire, 1934).

There is, of course, no lack of folktales in translation. But this particular genre is the subject of much debate, since the merit of the translations is assessed differently by social anthropologists, linguistic specialists, and students of more purely literary studies. However, it will be generally agreed that no one has yet done in English what Birago Diop has for Wolof folktales in his French renderings.[5] While admitting that it is impossible for translations to present the originals with their integration of action, dialogue and song, it may yet be contended that it is possible for a sensitive reader to feel something of their native quality when presented by a creative writer like Monsieur Diop. For it needs both the techniques of creative writing and the intuitive imagination operating through the perfectly bilingual artist to produce a translation which approximates to the quality of true art.

The tales collected by the missionary remain dry bones of sententiousness and moralizing. The anthropologist's specimens of oral literature are slices of life seen as a section of some culture under a microscope. The student of literature, by collating tales as regards structure, theme, moral, etc., gets only echoes of like expressions in folklorist literature. Only in so far as this study of parallels contributes to an awareness of the total experience in which folktales have their genesis, will it be considered fruitful as a literary exercise. Short of actually belonging to a society from birth, or having shared in its experience by a direct participation over a period, one can only hope to approximate to such a total experience through an intelligent understanding of the work of such writers and artists as have entered completely into the spirit of the tale as a living organism drawing its sustenance and significance from the life and imagination of the people with whom it is identified.

The unique example of such a writer in English is Amos Tutuola whose work has generally been either praised or blamed for the wrong reasons. It is not its "wonderful pidgin," nor its exotic quaintness, that makes his work so remarkable as a re-creation of oral material, but the fact that it preserves at least two essentials of the native folktale: its dramatic power, and its identity as lived experience integrated into the whole of life as known by the writer. The immediacy of such experience is realized through the adventures of the protagonists in the fantasy world of The Palm-Wine Drinkard[6] and other works of fiction written in an English idiom which seems to offend good taste, especially of those who know the Yoruba originals or other sources of the author's raw material. But there is no doubt that rhythm, repetition and proverb integrated in Tutuola's episodic narratives, provides a unique experience for the foreign reader, by conveying something of the authentic flavour of incongruities blended through a sensibility conditioned by the inter-play of the world of twentieth century technology and the twilight world of African folktale.

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[5] Birago Diop, Les Contes d'Amadoo Koumba (Paris, 1947) and Les Nouvelles Contes d'Amadoo Koumba (Paris, 1958).

[6] Amos Tutuola, The Palm-Wine Drinkard (London, 1952).

Between the straight transcription of oral material and the adaptation or transformation of originals in creative writing, there is a class of scholarly workmanlike translations supported by critical, close analysis of the oral forms and their significance in the African tradition. Outstanding examples include Professor Melville ~~Herskovits~~'s Dahomean Narrative.[7] Textual fidelity to the spoken word since his researches have resulted in the recent parallel texts of the Oxford series. H. F. Morris' The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Ankole[8] and L. Harries' Swahili Poetry[9] have set a high standard for future contributors to this series which caters for both specialists and general students of African oral lore. These works provide basic material for such linguistic and literary studies as the problems of translation, and the purpose and effect of adopting foreign patterns in place of African forms. Is the heroic spirit fundamentally the same in all ages and areas of the world, or does it vary with time and space? Is it legitimate to use Old English forms and rhythms, associated with the Anglo-Saxon milieu, to translate medieval and modern Swahili verse with Muslim associations? What is lost, gained, or falsely imposed in such a carry-over? Whatever the answers to these questions, a translator's experiments can only be justified in the measure to which he succeeds in conveying the meaning and spirit of the original. There is, however, distinguished precedent for boldness in this enterprise, as Elizabethan translators have shown. Through their art the classics of Greece and Rome acquired a currency which became a living reality to the imaginative life of the period; and much later, Keats could pay a glowing tribute to Chapman's Homer in an inspired sonnet.

Careful and serious thought can be seen in the work of African translators who are bringing the techniques of liguistic research to bear upon their rendering of West African songs and dirges. Funeral Dirges of the Akan People[10] of J. H. Nketia, the Ghanaian musicologist, is of immense value to students of literature and sociology alike. A. Babalola, specimens of whose work have appeared in African Affairs and Odu, has worked on the content and form of Ijala or Yoruba Hunters' Songs. His theories should stimulate much discussion when his book, now in the press, appears.

In spite of commendable efforts made to provide faithful versions or adaptations of work in Zulu and other South African languages, there continues to be a dearth of English translations of modern creative writing in the vernaculars. Thomas Mofolo's Chaka, first published more than forty years ago and translated in 1931,[11] has been followed by few if any translations of the best creative fiction in the vernaculars. One would like to see really first-class renderings of Shaaban Robert and D. O. Fagunwa[12] given wide circulation in inexpensive paperbacks. (Only as a parenthesis it may be observed that translations from English into the vernaculars, Krio and Pidgin constitute a fascinating field of linguistic and literary studies.)

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[7] M. J. & F. Herskovits, Dahomean Narrative (Evanston, London, 1958).

[8] H. F. Morris, The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Ankole (London, 1964).

[9] Lyndon Harries, Swahili Poetry (London, 1962).

[10] J. H. Nketia, Funeral Dirges of the Akan People (Achimota, 1958).

[11] Thomas Mofolo, Chaka (Morija, 1925) translated F. H. Dutton, 1931.

[12] J. A. Ramsaran, op. cit., pp. 26-28.

Turning to original works in English, three sub-divisions might be suggested for the purpose of discussion; but not to be taken as fixed categories into which all modern writing should be forced, each work confined to a specific category. These rather general groups may be labelled documentary, creative and critical. There are no hard and fast lines of demarcation between imaginative and non-imaginative writing, for the documentary and the creative shade into each other. J. E. Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound[13] is a good instance of the fictional blending with the factual as regards data and intention. The framework of its propaganda and its dialectic tone is consciously literary, being influenced by wide reading in English and classical literature. It is a pioneer work on pan-Africanism in which political ardour and a lively imagination co-operate to produce an episodic medley of the historical, pseudo-historical and fantastic; and it provides illuminating similarities and contrasts with the writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden[14] and others on the same theme.

Recent biographical and autobiographical writings are invaluable additions to the literature of nationalism, and at the same time they contribute to the development of African narrative and dialectic prose. The subject matter is generally a record of personal conflicts and achievements in the context of national aspirations and struggles. How far historical events are presented objectively, without conscious or unconscious distortion, it is for the historian to say. To a student of literature, the significance of the individual existence, (as interpreted through a self-concious personality) operating in a specific society, is the subject of analysis and appreciation. Whether these works transcend personal bounds and achieve a universal application, is of greater inportance than historical authenticity.

At many points, the avowedly factual biographer may be so highly selective in his material as to heighten an effect, by a decidedly strong cast of his own mind and the peculiar stamp of his own personality; so that his observations cannot be said to be strictly objective, acquiring as it does from time to time the emotive tone and other qualities of creative writing. For this reason alone it is wrong to classify biographies as documentary and strictly factual. These observations apply with greater force to autobiographies since the conscious and the subconscious, the objective and the subjective, are more inextricably woven in them. So a reader has to be always on the alert, ever keeping in mind the purpose of his study of a particular work in this class. Some of the finest literary works of recent years have been the autobiographical works of men like Peter Abrahams and Ezekiel Mphahlele,[15] in which the shaping spirit of the imagination has obviously operated, not to distort facts but to give a passionate force to their individual convictions regarding the undeniable rights of the individual to develop his humanity to the fullest. It is therefore not illegitimate to see their work as an extension and deepening of the emotional propaganda of their precursors in the field of Negro and African reform and renaissance movements towards pan-Africanism. "All art is propaganda," wrote Joyce Cary, in his essay on Art and Reality.[16]

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[13] Joseph E. Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (London, 1911).

[14] L. C. Gwam, "Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden." Ibadan, No. 15, March, 1963, 8-10.

[15] Peter Abrahams, Tell Freedom (London, 1954); Ezekiel Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue (London, 1959).

A just appreciation of every type of modern African writing--political and social documentary or imaginative--raises the matter of the relevance of the work of indigenous white, and expatriate black or white writers, who have made some aspect of Africa their subject matter. Many of these writers are associated with Africa by race, residence, long or short visits, and some by a particular bond of sympathy arising principally from their desire to understand the peculiar problems of human relationships in Africa, and thus to broaden their own sensibilities and responses to life generally. Two expatriates whose African experience resulted in both documentary and imaginative works of distinguished quality are Joyce Cary and Graham Greene. Cary's period in Nigeria led him to study the nature of individual freedom in its relation to tribal and national obligations and loyalties.[17] His essays on African progress towards nationhood, and the individual dilemma in a fast-changing African under the pressure of Western civilisation, show how acute an outside observer can be. And it is illuminating to study his interpretation of the facts side by side with the African's understanding of them.

The particularised concrete Africa of Cary's novels is often criticised by Africans as a distorted picture, but it is essentially true in universal terms of human conflicts and aspirations. The subject of conflict between the old and the new in Africa is treated by Cary as background to the deeper theme of the individual's pursuit of self-realization, whether as that of the artist in The Horse's Mouth or of the various characters, expatriates and Africans, in Mr. Johnson and The African Witch. Writing before the present upsurge of nationalism in Africa, he was well aware of the intrinsic nature of African values that cannot be measured in material terms. In his introduction to Denys Craig's Man in Ebony, he wrote:

> ". . . Foreign arts, foreign religions, are so destructive in Africa because African civilisation is not self-conscious. Its peoples, divided by immense forests and deserts, have scarcely an idea of each other, and certainly none of a common legacy of history and art . . . African religion, because it has not recorded its ideas, its rituals, its traditions is everywhere dying.
>
> "Only those who do not grasp the nature of religious tradition will be complacent at this loss. Has any final intuition of the human spirit been without its value to the world?"[18]

Today, African civilisation as seen through the eyes of African writers, artists, and philosophers is nothing if not self-conscious. This same heightened self awareness is the goal towards which all serious-thinking persons move through the motivations of their peculiar ambition in love, politics, religion or art. And in this progress, they speak out either in their own voices or through the personae they assume in the works they create. To quote Cary again:

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[16] Joyce Cary, Art and Reality (London, 1958).

[17] See M. M. Mahood, Joyce Cary's Africa (London, 1959).

[18] Denys Craig, Man in Ebony (London, 1950), p. 12.

> "We are told that novelists must not preach. This is nonsense. All serious artists preach--they are perfectly convinced of the truth as they see it, and they write to communicate that truth."[19]

Like Cary, Graham Greene's documentary writing and his novels on Africa present the same human dilemma in explicit and implicit terms, epitomised in the title given to his travelogues--In Search of a Character: Two African Journals.[20] His pre-occupation in the earlier of the two journals, Journey Without Maps, was with the theme of redressing the maintaining the balance, between cerebration and emotionalism, upset by twentieth century technology and materialism. This theme is seen to be more clearly related to the problem of evil and sin as he moves through a physical and mental "journey without maps," because the sense of mystery is so real when one is removed from the common-place or sees it as though for the first time. In other words, there emerges in his writing a mystique of Africa as a symbol adumbrated in such significant titles as Venture to the Interior and Dark Eye in Africa[21] of Van der Post's books, in which there is a more obvious blending of the rational and non-rational through experience in the preternatural atmosphere of the inexplicable.

These intimations of the inexplicable are made the study of systematic investigation through the dialectics of some present-day African scholars. Professor W. Abraham in The Mind of Africa[22] maintains that there is a general type of African culture which embraces specific cultures varying according to their milieux; and on the basis of this assumption, attempts to analyse the specific culture of the Akans of Ghana as a paradigm. Throughout his thesis he is involved in showing how the rational and non-rational are synthesized in African culture. The understanding of this synthesis as it operates in African institutions, secular and religious--to employ terms of a Western dichotomy, is essential to a just appreciation of all that goes on in the visible and invisible world of African existence. In a frankly theological exposition, E. Bolaji Idowu in Olodumare[23] examines the religious and moral implications of man's relationship with the numinous, as based upon the African traditional acceptance of a connexion between the phenomenal world and that of the non-material.

Imaginative literature in the form of the novel, drama and poetry while largely concerned with man in society, should also give some insight into the non-rational, sub-conscious processes of the human psyche. The majority of African writers in English, when treating these forms of creative writing do not appear to probe deep enough into human motivation. They are so much concerned with the surface play of things that the external conflicts become for them the essentials. Nor do they often rise above the moralising quality of the folktale, for they seldom attempt to deal with the central problem of evil and suffering as such. There is, as a result, little resonance in their themes, only flat statements of the obvious. This is demonstrated time and again in the over-worked topics of the interplay between the old and the new, Western and African; and in the protest novels from the areas of racial conflict.

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[19] Cary, op. cit., p. 109.

[20] Graham Greene, In Search of a Character: Two African Journals (London, 1961).

[21] L. Van Der Post, Dark Eye in Africa (London, 1955) and Venture to the Interior (London, 1952).

[22] W. E. Abraham, The Mind of Africa (London, 1962).

[23] E. B. Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (Lond, 1962).

There are, of course, notable exceptions in the case of the novels of Chinua Achebe and Peter Abrahams. Things Fall Apart[24] gives the sensitive reader a chastening sense of the loss to human dignity of rulers and ruled when a society, torn by conflicting loyalties, loses it traditional self-respect and inner poise. In Mine Boy,[25] Xuma's suffering is realised with an insight rare in African fiction; Abrahams sounds the deep perplexity of man, in the face of unaccountable agony, without losing faith in human tenacity and courage. An unusual novel that has not received due attention is Gabriel Okara's The Voice.[26] It is remarkable both as regards its theme and its technique. Within the compass of this short work is compressed the spiritual odyssey of Okolo in a world of shadows and symbols. The pleasures of the senses, the tempting prospect of popularity and power, the fear of appearing eccentric--these are snares in the way of the soul in quest of truth. There are striking contrasts of scenes in which the waking certainty of the clear intellect alternates with the nightmarish incongruities and absurdities of a Kafkaesque world of vague suggestions. The technical novelty lies chiefly in the manipulation of a stylised English not fully forged as an efficient instrument of Ijaw idiom and image in translation. But it was an experiment well worth making. If Okara can modulate his manner, so that frequent repetitions of the same phrase rhythms and word for word equivalents of indigenous imagery are adapted to English idiom, his style will cease to be the irritating mannerism it tends to become after one has read the first few chapters with pleasure.

Okara's novel demonstrates how it is possible for the African novelist to get beneath the surface appearance to a play of ideas while utilising the old material of tribal life under pressure of changing conditions. In spite of the mere purveying of sociological and ethnographical data in the guise of fiction, which forms the staple of much African creative writing, there also are signs of a genuine effort, on the part of the more thoughtful writers, to give form and significance to what appears confusing and incomprehensible in contemporary life.

Many of the foregoing remarks on the subject matter of fiction apply as well to modern African drama which is developing under the twin influence of Western techniques of stage presentation and the quality of the indigenous, communually functional drama of traditional village life. There is a strong tendency to use the theatre as an instrument for inculcating the norms of social behaviour. Crime and punishment, sin and suffering, virtue rewarded--one of these is usually the theme which is seldom subtly developed. For example, the fall of the might and the vengeance of the Almighty go together in the very popular Yoruba plays of Hubert Ogunde, Duro Ladipo and Kola Ogunmola. Biblical narrative and Shakespeare's plays are exploited for adaptations or for ideas for plots which are most successful with audiences. Of course, more recently the conflict between Christianity and paganism, political chicanery, western education and its effect on traditional behaviour, racial discrimination and persecution have tended to introduce a greater degree of social realism on the stage.

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[24] Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (London, 1958).

[25] Peter Abrahams, Mine Boy (London, 1954).

[26] Gabriel Okara, The Voice (London, 1964).

The exploitation of traditional myths and legends is a feature of the more sophisticated dramatists familiar with the use made of classical myths and biblical legends in European plays. Evidence of this may be found in the work of university graduates aware of the vitalising force of indigenous myth, whether integrated in plot narrative or made to function in the allusive imagery of poetic drama. Their plays tend to be more closely patterned after the straight drama of the western stage; and the progress of the action in these plays is unlike that of the leisurely movement of the traditional operatic drama with song and dance.

The potentialities of the traditional forms have not been sufficiently investigated by the modern African theatre. The excellent dramatisation of The Palm--Wine ~~Drinkard~~ shows the great possibilities that lie in the direction of a stylised operatic dance drama. The concentration of population in urban centres is creating a greater demand for ready-made drama as entertainment, in place of the communally created, functional drama of village life. More thought should be given to the publication and production of plays both in the old style and the new.

Several anthologies of African verse, in which the writers in English have been well represented, have recently been published on both sides of the Atlantic. The works of a small number of individual poets have also appeared separately. It would perhaps be invidious to single out particular poets for special notice. It might be more useful for the present purpose to look more generally at the subject of African verse in English. Since the end of World War II, Africans have given serious thought to writing English verse, although there had been practitioners in this field before then. Their work was, however, more in the nature of academic exercises imitating the pious and patriotic sentiments of Victorian versifiers. But occasionally a genuine poetic sensibility expressed itself in the authentic voice of poetry as in the case of Gladys Casely Hayford of Sierra Leone. Her mother tongue being English, there was no question of her translating her thoughts from an African language. Many bilingual Africans today, unlike her, have taken to English after having been nourished on the vernacular in their earlier years.

Where urbanisation and western education have not alienated them from the mother tongue and a closeness of experience with the physical aspects of their land and the ways of village life, their poetry abounds in sensuous images as a result of the immediacy of the situations and moods they attempt to express and to communicate to their readers. The particularities of the concrete Africa forming the basis of much of the imagery, in the best of these poets, is not mere local colour or a veneer of African experience, they are felt in the blood. All natural phenomena, the seasons, their associated festivals and rituals, masks, songs, rhythm of drum and dance are found integrated in their lyrical expressions. Yet it is true to say that these same elements used in patriotic or nationalistic verse to extol the African past, lose the individual tone and become the expression of a communal voice.

As far as language is concerned, some critics think they detect an African quality in the English employed in modern poetry--both in the rhythm and the diction. But it is the wrenching of words from their conventional connotations and associations, rather than syntactic or idiomatic variants that are more obvious. The highly emotive words black and white are the ones most exploited in order to exorcise from them the spirit of colonialism and the myth of racial superiority. For the same reason Christian symbols are handled with a blasphemous bravado, rather than an inner conviction that the religion of pre-colonial Africa, or any other belief or ideology, can satisfy the intellectual and emotional needs of the poets themselves. Truth seems to have a local habitation for some African poets. But a deep understanding of their own indigenous beliefs is sending others back in search of the universal truth.

Literary criticism as an aid in this search is only now beginning to play a part in African writing. Admittedly, there is much log-rolling going on in circles of mutual admiration, but at the same time in other quarters there is also independent, objective investigation. Mphahlele's The African Image[27] is an index of the quality and temper of the kind of criticism which derives its interest chiefly from the present African struggle for individual and social freedom, and for an "African Image" in keeping with national prestige. There seem to be two main pre-occupations as far as African literary criticism is concerned, namely, to proclaim a renaissance of African culture in the growing mass of modern writing in English; and to debate whether it is African in a peculiar way that makes it different from any other literature written in English. Both are related to national prestige, the implication being: every nation must have a literature worthy of its ideal; every national literature must be different from the others. Questions about theories of literature and the universal validity of literature as art are only peripheral in most discussions. The result of the present attitude in African literary criticism is that the fluidity of the arts is being frozen in compartments, and the wholeness or unity of human existence is being fragmented in direct opposition to the traditional African way of thinking.

Unless students of literature realise that their field of studies runs continuously into the other academic studies in all directions--not even limited to the humanistic--there will not be a change of emphasis in African critical writing. For if the aim of cultural studies is, as it should be, the development of cultural sensibility, they must be open to all of life, and every form of expression given to it in literature and art by the intellect and emotion of man. Hence the relevance of the inter-relationship of indigenous and exotic forms of expression in whatever medium it may be. In literature, European genres have been imitated or adapted in African fiction, drama and poetry; but little or no attention is paid to African indigenous form with a view to exploiting their qualities with necessary modifications in English writing. To be able to consider the practicability of doing so would assume in African writers an equal facility of expression in English and their own vernaculars, a knowledge of the linguistic qualities of the latter, and a real understanding of the ethos and philosophy underlying artistic expressions in the African milieu. In other words, language and literatures must be studied in the context of all the other subjects that go to form a comprehensive African program.

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[27] E. Mphahlele, The African Image (London, 1962).

Discussion

Harries: What about the problem of doubtful methods of interpretation; for example, Kagame's Catholic-oriented writings on the Ruanda view of life?

Ramsaran: It is necessary to look at more than one interpretation. Drama is a very important and stimulating form of African literature, which has been influenced both by native ritual traditions and by Western theatre.

Lienhardt: Do Nigerian students have different reactions to African writing in French and English?

Ramsaran: Writing in French and English is equally accessible to Nigerian students.

Lienhardt: And the African content is of course more available to them.

Arnott: Would you please comment on the background of traditional Yoruba drama.

Ramsaran: I would like to point out that the rhythm of the performance of a Yoruba play is different from that of a Western drama. The thing being enaacted is often known to the audience, who can therefore participate in the performance.

Povey: But what is the connection between this drama and the Yoruba dramas written in English?

Ramsaran: Soyinka's _The Lion And the Jewel_ is a more obviously Western-influenced play than some others which show a combination of influences. They might use singing and dancing more and might be less hurried in their presentation of the plot.

Armstrong: Perhaps such plays might be more like Tutuola's _The Palm Wine Drinkard_.

Figueroa: Has research ever been done on the kind of English used by speakers of English as a second language?

Ramsaran: Many African writers are more at home in English than in their first language, although Nigerian writers are very close to their people.

Harries: Dylan Thomas spoke and wrote English as a second language.

Jordan: What about the tendency of African writers to write _vis a vis_ the White man.

Ramsaran: This tendency does exist.

Jordan: Is "negritude" disappearing?

Ramsaran: Lots of anthropological data is still included in African writing.

Jordan: Due to the influence of the audience, this is not present in South African writing.

Snyder: I think that there is less "negritude" in English African writing than there is in French African writing.

Armstrong: An African student could no more tell what is distinctly and uniquely African about "Girl Bathing" than a speaker of Yoruba could tell you the phonemes of his own language.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPREHENSION OF A NATIONAL LITERATURE--NIGERIA

Robert Plant Armstrong

Absolutism or relativism are the alternatives in literary criticism quite as much as they are in other fields devoted to studying human endeavor; the former is largely deductive in its application, while the latter proceeds inductively. One may assert the Aristotelian definition of a tragedy, for example, and admit to this class only a very few, and chiefly very old, works; or he may demand that a novel have a certain kind of dramatic complexity, concluding that any work not measuring up is simply not a novel. This is the absolutist's view, and its proponents have included some of the most distinguished men in philosophy or in applied criticism. But there are others who seek to understand literary forms as the variable products of variable human activity; such men would find it impossible to adopt the position of the absolutist.

Absolutism is not restricted to form, however; a decade or so ago moral absolutism held great power, and it dictated that a "decent" work of literary art could not consider certain kinds of themes or dramatize certain kinds of behavior--the praise of evil, let us say, or homosexuality. Marxists critics are class absolutists, not because they seek to "explain" literature in terms of its class origins, certainly, but because they reify those origins into goods or ills and make of them the bases for critical evaluations. Should they have restricted their examinations to the former activity they would have made of themselves relativists, in the manner which had been recommended by Taine, whose trinity of race, culture, and milieu--stands in principle as our surest, most judicious guide to a relativistic understanding of literature in its historical and cultural context.

Taine understood in terms of his time, and if the fundamental aptness of his schema impresses us today so does the inadequacy of its terms. Taine was a learned child of his age and, using a basically "natural science" approach, he reflects contemporary anthropological attitudes, linguistic and scientific methods, and social knowledge. As these have all changed, so must our understanding of what he proposed.

Today we should have to modify his terms to, perhaps, race, culture, and individual. This is an odd bag of terms, perhaps a trifle odder than his, for the concepts of anthropology and psychology have become more specialized. We draw, in two of these terms, upon two different schools of psychology--one Jungian (race), the other (individual), what shall we say? Non-Jungian? Certainly the psychology it implies is markedly more positivistic. It is for this reason that one must characterize the three terms as an "odd-bag," for it is admittedly somewhat outrageous to forge into the same schema two such opposed psychologies. But our objective is a useful approach, one that will fit the data, and not the rigorous logical consistency devotees of one sort or another would wish from us.

Taine appears more clearly to adumbrate Jung than the positivists in his discussion of "race" ("internal mainsprings") and "psychology," for he is concerned to speak as though the predispositions to certain kinds of behavior were in some sense inherited. This is precisely the case with Jung's collective unconscious, a concept that has perennially proven seminal to students of art and literature, and could prove to be of a certain seminality--at this point of kind and degree unknown--to students of the "harder" social sciences. In any case it appears to many that there can be little reasonable doubt that the primitive matter of the unconscious with which Jung was concerned does in fact exist, and that it is presentational matter, dealt with significantly differently and enormously suggestively by him. If such presentational materials differ from culture to culture, and we have no reason to believe this is not the case, this would be of vast importance to the individual interested in the affective products--arts--of cultures other than his own.

Taine's culture and milieu, which he elsewhere defines as "external pressure" and "acquired momentum" respectively,[1] can both be viewed as being implicit in our word "culture." From his discussion of "surroundings," it is clear that he includes more than we would in culture, e.g., physical environment and climate. At the same time, however, despite the fact that his notions were not as sharply detailed as ours are after a hundred years of study, he clearly takes account of the order of phenomena the anthropologist generalizes into culture.

It is in his discussion of milieu that he is particularly incisive, going further than most present-day anthropologists in perceiving the variability of the structures of art forms and their systemic relationships. This is an especially important view for this essay, for it implies recognition of the fact that the study of culture includes not only the organization of institutions into a total organism, which must provide the abiding frame of substantive reference for any work of art, but the acknowledgement of different values, perceptions, and symbols as well.

Against the background of race, culture, and milieu, then, must the individual work be viewed. Taine was keenly aware of the individual factor, and indeed discussed it, though always in terms of each of his trinity of causes. It is perhaps a function of our own time that I am moved to list it separately, for it is today commonplace knowledge that it is the individual who is ultimately both the bearer and the changer of culture. One must here rely upon the investigations of the positivistic psychologists who have gone to the field to study by actual testing and analysis, and to interpret by rigorous methods, the adaptation of the individual to his culture.

Now if we are to proceed relativistically, using a context derived from Taine, there are clearly two problems involved. One is the development of a taxonomy of literary forms and the other is the evaluation of those forms. We shall ultimately examine at some length the problems inherent in critical evaluation, since clearly both the normativist and the positivist must exercise their dispositions here. At this point, I wish only to observe that the normativist (absolutist) insinuates his views into the problem of taxonomy by insisting that given work is not of a given type because it violates given prinicples that "govern" that particular form. As I write this it seems distinctly out of place that in this age of the sociological man it would be necessary to make such a statement. It would seem self-evident that such is not at all the way to proceed. One reaches classifications through induction, not by deduction. To resort to the latter method is to inhibit the development of art, which must change as all viable organisms change. But that the need to state this should appear at all unusual is a mark of dangerous naivete in our critical professions.

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[1] Allen and Clark, p. 490. Complete bibliographic information is to be found in the Bibliography at the end of the essay.

The relevance of all this to the discussion of a national literature is plain. It is equally plain that literature, having accepted the necessity of understanding the literature of an age in terms of the conditions constitutive of that age, have not in any significant way applied the same diligent efforts to reaching an understanding of the literature of other contemporary cultures. The Sociology of Literature is not entirely respectable among literary scholars, and understandably so, for such studies are usually without marked literary relevance. What is required is a view that takes account of the cultural variables and is yet trenchantly and fully "literary" in its method and concern.

Prior to this, however, stands in naked aspect the necessity of perceiving the existence of separate bodies of literature in areas outside those parts of the world traditionally familiar to literary scholars. This is a formidable problem, critical in its import, since to date the question of national literatures has not been raised. The works coming out of black Africa provide a unique challenge, for never before in the history of the English language has there emerged a distinctive body of materials similar to but indeed not English literature. Those seriously concerned are too easily prone to adopt the naive view that since these works are in English, they are English--or, in a "major" language they are to be judged by the criteria set up for "major" literature, or, simply "literature."

In large measure, neither Africans themselves nor those Europeans most familiar with and dedicated to literature in Africa, have thus far given meaningful consideration to the question of ethnic diversity in the works that have appeared. One sees this in both books (Gerald Moore's Seven African Writers) and conference reports (Makerere in 1962, Fourah Bay in 1963). In each instance the expressed concern has been rather with "literature," which presumably exists the world over, in such a view, as of a piece, immediately available in full comprehensibility to any intelligent reader. This view seems further to suggest that literature is a tool for the perception of the true and the beautiful and that, as such, literature is as "objective," as open to universal scrutiny, as a scientific procedure. "African literature" is the smallest term used in these discussions, and this with a certain degree of discomfort. Ezekiel Mphahlele expresses this attitude with his characteristically crisp thought and rhetoric when he says,

> African literature should be treated as part of world literatures, and not as something specially African; . . . there is in reality only good and bad and mediocre writing, whether African, Chinese, or Mexican.[2]

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[2] Mphahlele, p. 228.

They would not appear to belong to the same school of thought as Dan Jacobson who, although he maintains that there will not be an "African" literature because "Africans" have lacked "human reality," nonetheless appears to admit the possibility of specific differences among literatures.

Although I have never heard any of the Nigerian writers state that they accept the inevitability of literary speciation, I have heard them maintain that European critics "cannot" criticize African works, a position which would seem to imply some such consideration. There is, on the other hand, a readiness among American scholars to accept the fact of speciation into national literatures. At the meetings of the Modern Language Association in Chicago (December, 1965) this fact was taken for granted so readily in the first conference on African literature that the first resolution asserted that the conference be designated as concerned not with "African literature," but with "African literatures."

There is I suspect no serious person who would deny the fact that one culture differs from another, nor that such differences pervade the totality of the behavior of the human populations whose acts constitute the various cultures. We thus may not doubt that individuals reared in a culture are reflective of that culture; but there seems to persist an insidious notion that writers, educated in a European country and well read in European literature, will write European literature. This view is so patently open to serious objection that we could ignore it were it not for the fact that it is widely held by responsible people.

We here accept the notion, therefore, that as nations eventuate into cultures, so do literatures develop into national literatures--we may accept even more; this is to say that in important respects such literatures are in part constitutive of such national cultures. Returning to our reformulation of Taine's schema, we may generalize the three principles of race, culture, and individual into one governing term whose referent is a phenomenon the presence or absence of which determines whether a separate literature has come into being. This term is ethnicity, a concept that proves most useful in clearing away much of the obfuscation that has developed in discussions to date.

Any work executed by an individual informed by the unique values, perceptions, aesthetics, and the whole system of social, political, and economic structures of an ethnic group--black or white, Moslem or Christian, educated or nearly illiterate--contributes to and defines the literature of that group. Until this time the discussions of African literature have been filled with confusions. Shall Alan Paton be admitted, or Elspeth Huxley? Since we have already seen that "African literature" is a meaningless abstraction, so may we reject the questions. But if our concern is South African literature, or East African literature, there is then no doubt that Paton and Huxley are to be included. Their values are rooted in their respective countries, their perceptions subtly shaped by their life-long African experiences. If their works are unlike those in Zulu or Kikuyu literature, so be it. There is no law requiring simplicity in the structure of a literature. On the other hand, Graham Greene is not a Liberian, nor is Joseph Conrad a product of the Congo.

Their books, quite simply, are not in any meaningful sense Liberian or Congolese, and they are no more items in Liberian or Congolese literature than de Toqueville's or Mrs. Trollope's accounts of the Americans are part of American literature or Pearl Buck's novels works of Chinese literature.

Sometimes a national literature exists in a fairly homogeneous state, which is not to say that it is without variety. This is to say that despite its formal and substantive patterned variety, it is all informed by common--or a limited range of--values, perceptions, and experiences. On a scale of homogeneity, English literature would rank high in this sense, and, although it is not my intention--nor indeed is it within the range of my abilities--to make a rank-ordering of national literatures, American literature would perhaps be placed somewhat lower on the scale. New states, however, pose obvious and different problems. Zulu works must be included in South African literature, Kikuyu in Kenyan, and the works of the Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba as well as English-language literatures in Nigerian literature. It is self-evident that in new states, where there is as yet no common national culture, where a multiplicity of ethnic groups exists, a national literature becomes more a collection of literatures than a single, homogeneous one. It is necessary to observe here that I am speaking of the present nations with full awareness that political evolution might well in the future see any or many of these states dissolved.

There are, in the sense of time, but two views of a literature--diachronic and synchronic. The former is of interest primarily to the literary historian, who is a kind of literary archaeologist, the latter to those concerned with criticism and taxonomy. Since our task here is to study the present, we are committed to the latter concerns. If we are to make any headway, in this pursuit, there will have to be references to a specific national literature. Because it comes from an area that has been well studied, and because it exists in relatively great quantity and is of most interesting characteristics, the literature of Nigeria will concern us--and not all the forms of that literature, but the novel only, and that in English. In general terms, however, it is a complex literature, comprised of works in Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, and English. These languages convey works in poetry, drama, history, and prose fiction. Further, as the language complexity would suggest, these materials represent a number of different ethnic groups, each somewhat different, in important ways, from the other. At the same time, however, too much can be made of this diversity. The importance attaching to the emphasis one places upon this fact, depends upon the perspective of the investigator. In any case, if one's concern is with generalization, it is clear that from the point of view of certain salient social, economic, and valuational factors these different ethnic groups are more alike than different. They are more akin to one another, for example, than any one of them is to the Bedouin, the Javanese, or the Scots.[3]

We can in this short essay concern ourselves with but one of the three reference terms which must be invoked in any complete examination of a national literature. Since the whole area of myth and its symbolic significations, as implied in "race," is beyond us at this time, and in view of the fact that the "individual" can be surveyed and understood only in terms of more general considerations, we are here committed to some brief comments on the central term of the Taine-derived trinity--culture. The areas of culturally determined particularity in a national literature are four: function content, structure, and aesthetic.

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[3] See Herskovits, pp. 81-85, for a general description of the culture areas.

In general terms, the function of a national literature chiefly concerns symbols of general significance together with their attendant values. There are few people, I suspect, who would wish to deny the critical role a living body of symbols plays in maintaining the autonomous cultural existence of a social or political group. A national literature is then, in essence, a repository of symbols which embody important values. These symbolic elements may be symbols as such, or they may be representations of values by means of the substance and methods of dramatic enactment. But it is not only from the symbol stock-in-trade that a national literature draws; it creates new symbolic materials as well, so that it gives voice and belief to new manifestations of value, and provides the link of continuity between the new and the old.

The function of a national literature is not exclusively to be reflective of the collective consciousness and unconsciousness, however, but to be constitutive of it as well. As it structures and restructures the old and new values, the literature both asserts and expands the values and consciousness of the people. Symbols shown in new signification, in novel relationships, new symbols juxtaposed against the old--all these imaginative feats achieve precisely that.

Language is a factor of symbolic value as well--and here I am speaking only of the writing in English--for as there is an American English, just so is there a Nigerian English, with undoubtedly exotic connotations and strange affect pried into simple and proper English words. The role of writers of both prose and--more notably--poetry in executing this process is too well-known to require further discussion here.

Obviously to perceive such symbols and their significance would require the exhaustive researches of a corps of scholars, with a more than casual understanding of the ethnographic information, and a high degree of critical imagination. This is as full and demanding a lifetime of challenge as are similar studies in Classical or Renaissance literature, the works of Horace or Shakespeare. The preliminary view being presented here, therefore, can do little beyond providing certain suggestions. Angus Wilson alone among critics I have read has perceived one fundamental element in this inventory of symbols. In his review of Achebe's A Man of the People Wilson writes,

> It is (his) overriding concern with conscience that gives an extra dimension to the obsession with the nature and the future of his own race which Mr. Achebe necessarily shares with all other writers. There are subtle differences between the "chi" which troubles a West African and the moral conscience that gnaws a European. . .[4]

The chi and the conscience are, as Mr. Wilson is fully aware and indeed states, particular representations of the chief concern of most African writers--the old versus the new, the African versus the European. It is in addressing themselves to this confrontation that the writers engage in the process of asserting old and introducing new symbols, structuring and restructuring them. But to say only this much is to overintellectualize the problem by making it appear as though, out of a spectrum, however broad or narrow, writers had elected to examine this one. The fact of the matter is that this dialectic of old versus new is the inescapable milieu in which a preponderance of Africans live. Even Tutuola, an ardent romanticist, is unable to escape his mis-en-scene, and his magnificent tale-telling is fraught with effects of the confrontation.

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[4] Wilson, p. 27.

There is one final point to be made concerning function. There is little doubt that a predominating concern of the arts in Guinea Coast Africa has been, historically, a clear didacticism which suggests that the exercise of the creative imagination carries with it the obligation to make statements of social value. There is little doubt that the novels reflect this cultural insistence, and to a degree which sets the Nigerian novels, as a group, apart from--let us say--contemporary English novels. The writers' concern with the old versus the new does not exist in a value vacuum, and the analysis given this problem is not intended merely to provide the stage for interpersonal dynamics which might be construed as a purely artistic concern. Rather there seems universally in these novels to be present a clear moral basis whose function it is to make a value statement about the situation and to teach the reader that value--the worth or evil of past customs, the evils of the city, the traps that await the "been-to" who is trapped between what he learned abroad and what in fact he must do at home.

One cannot maintain that the writers of Nigeria have invented any new forms, but one can state with certainty that they have placed distinctively "Nigerian" markings upon their executions of the traditional ones. The novel is a case in point.

As of the date of this writing, there has not appeared one novel, not excepting the works of Achebe, that is totally admirable by European standards. An evolutionary dramatic action, with its parts genetically related--which I take to mean structure--is typically weak. More often than not action units are sequential rather than genetic. There is to be sure a continuum in respect of the realization of evolutionary development, which is to say that some works are less genetic than others. Even in the (by European criteria) best work to date, Achebe's Arrow of God, the parts are not all, or do not appear to be, evolutionarily contingent one upon the other. One thinks, for example, of the sudden, important role played by the Christian church in the yam harvest, a pivotal dramatic function not clearly related to the previous course of events.

Further, the structures tend to be developed with emphasis upon action at the expense of introspection and interpretation. There is, accordingly, a kind of physicality that characterizes the novels, and it is for this reason that there has not yet what could be called a "psychological" novel out of the corpus thus far produced by the Nigerian novelists. As this whole tendency exists in process, however, and in view of the fact that literary forms are under intense acculturative influences, it is difficult to speculate with any degree of precision when this partiality toward density of action will be ameliorated. For it to be completely eradicated would appear at present to be unlikely, for this would involve the radical modification of basic cultural patterns which, being unconsciously learned, are not easily subject to conscious manipulation.

The content of the novels is naturally inescapably Nigerian. It is apparent that, truly, a world of cultural allusions exists which give a substantive exoticism to the works. There are myriad details from the cultural inventory--from artifacts to behavioral structures. Of course, these four levels at which the existence of national definition may be perceived do not exist independently, but rather tend to have direct effects one upon the other. The following, although it is intended to demonstrate a relevant factor of content, is also clearly to be seen as bearing a significant relationship to what we have observed about the structure of the novels.

For this demonstration we must return to a consideration of the old versus the new. Naturally enough the most usable device to realize this confrontation is the dramatization of interpersonal relationships. What is not necessarily clear to European readers is the reason behind the number of instances in which the field of dramatic enactment is not simply among individuals drawn together by the force of dramatic necessity or circumstances, but rather among the members of two or more generations of one or more families. If we, as European readers, fail to sense the full meaning of the drama inherent in such situations, it is because we do not understand or cannot in intellectual or emotional terms apprehend the nature of the functioning of the Ibo or Yoruba family structures. It follows that the full impact of the symbolic value of the family as such is lost upon us.

The real focal point of the strains of acculturation is thus the system of intergenerational rights and responsibilities inherent in the nature of the family. In a very real sense, the actual protagonists in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God, and in Nwankwo's Danda are not Okonkwo, Ezeulu, or Danda but the family or the clan, and without an appreciation of this fact one is as precluded from full understanding of the drama as he is cut off from fully appreciating a Renaissance work concerning the murder of a king without full comprehension of the contemporary sense of horror attending such a deed, a horror deriving from the peculiar status and role of the monarch.

An appreciation of this family/clan orientation brings much of Danda into focus. The apparently capricious and purposeless shifting from Danda to Araba which weakens the structure of the work to the reader accustomed to the individual protagonist assumes a clear logic to one who thinks in terms of this system of intergenerational rights and responsibilities, extending from the ancestors down to children yet unborn. The family is the tragic sufferer of Danda's irresponsibilities, and his picaresque behavior becomes, under such circumstances, less charming than sinful.

One can identify a host of subordinate symbols which cluster about this ordering, primary symbol. The Christian church is one, and so are the traditional gods. The automobile is another, as is the traditionally-selected wife as opposed to the one chosen for western, romantic reasons. The novels are filled with such items of symbolic significance, and until we attempt to discern them in their own terms, and thus to understand them, we may very well continue to regard the Nigerian novels as, by and large, poor copies of the novels of England and America.

What we are really speaking of, when we invoke the pervasive presence of *ethnicity* as the criterion for defining a separate literature, is perhaps, in the instance of West Africa, not national literatures at all, but rather *cultural* literatures. The fact of the matter is that there is perhaps not yet a *national* culture among the west African states, although this is a variable from country to country, and granting the perserverance of nations, such cultures will become better defined as the national experiences mount. Nonetheless, however arbitrary it may be at this moment to speak of a Ghanaian or a Nigerian literature, it is more correct than to maintain that there is no African literature, or, on the other hand, that there is "an African literature." It is possible to speak of Ibo or Yoruba literature, but this is ambiguous since it suggests folklore, or works done in those languages. Further, it is too particulate especially since reasonable bases exist for generalization into greater categories. The logic of such generalization is to be found in that same similarity of institutional form and content, over a wide area, that lead to the formulation of the concept of the culture-area. I would raise no objection if one insisted upon defining a Guinea Coast literature; indeed one can do do with the same justification that he uses in defining, for example, Scandinavian literature, where there exist sufficient common features of supranational order to justify the generalization. Guinea Coast literature is, however, in all probability the highest meaningful classification one can make. And still this does not preclude the utility of the concept of a national literatures--a concept more likely, as we have just noted, to be of greater tenability in the future than it may be at the moment.

Thus while *content*, in particular, would seem to drive us to particularism and the delineation of a chaos of specific literatures, there is an overriding system which sends us once more in the direction of generalization. In a recent article I described, in a very general sense, some of the terms that could be said to exist in a Guinea Coast aesthetic, principles applicable not only to literature, but to all the arts. In this essay I established an aesthetic typology, consisting of *mesoformal*, by which I intended to characterize European arts which are rounded, full-dimensional in their presentation (attention to the fullness of the body in sculpture, to fullness of musical sound and structure); *ectoformal*, which term characterized the arts of Java, where the emphasis is upon the distal aspects of structure (heads, hands, feet greatly emphasized in dance and sculpture; chordal postures in music, without intensive exploitation of musical time); and *endoformal*, a word which suggests a kind of visceral emphasis (with a de-emphasis upon both roundedness, distality, and accurate proportionality in sculpture and dance, and with close tonal ranges and extraordinary analysis of musical time).

Respecting literature, I noted in this essay that "a brief comment on the contemporary novel in English in West Africa is in order, for though we avoided discussing traditional literature because of the language problem, there is no such difficulty here. And it will be useful to see if the affect of Guineaism does in any sense shape the practice of an alien art form.

"While there exist in West Africa novels that are fully satisfying even by a European aesthetic, there are others in which one finds some curious features. These curiosities must either be considered, from our point of view, as blemsishes in the practice of the novel, or else they must be examined and explained in the frame of reference of another aesthetic. The former approach has been followed, both in reviews and in the conversation of informed people. The latter has not, in any meaningful way, been attempted.

"There are two practices to be considered. The first pertains to the tendency, present in varying degrees in all the novels, to depict characters in such a way that the European reader finds them without believable dimensionality. They exist, in a word, as types, and as wooden. The second factor is the common presence of a structure lacking the dramatic build the European is accustomed to witnessing. This latter tendency is particularly noticeable in the endings, which often appear to be contrived rather than integral.

"It is not impossible to speculate, in terms of the aesthetic of endoformalism, that lack of individuation in characters is affectively related to the practice of exploiting narrow ranges and of avoiding distality which is intrinsically manipulative and thus of significance in character delineation. These shadowy actors of the novels are in fact reminiscent of the generalization of the carvings, a generalization deriving from the concern with force and its representation through truncal emphasis. Indeed, with such preoccupation portraiture is difficult, and when individuation is necessary, it is in effect "written" in scars upon the trunk or face of the sculpture.

"The curiosities of dramatic structure relate functionally to this. Shallow characters do not act in full emotion or full reason. But there is another factor as well. The absence of mounting, believably evolved, and integrated dramatic structure is possibly related also to that attitude toward the exploitation of time one sees in both music and dance. Further, the ultimate logical referents are, in the Guinea Coast arts, external to the works themselves, since the works are instrumental. Accordingly, density of action would be sufficient in itself, and dramatic evolution, as long as it is minimally sufficient, is sacrificed to an external--in this case social--purpose."[5]

I should like now to supplement this hypothesis with some further considerations which bear upon the points of these extrapolations from the aesthetic as it pertains to literature. My concern here is with the "shallowness of draft" of the character delineation in the novels, as well as with the logic of structure, bearing in mind that in the discussion of Danda and the role of the family we have already made a pertinent incursion into this area.

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[5] Armstrong, pp. 9-10.

Specifically, what I have in mind is a theory of human action and motivation for those actions, a common principle that has clear relevance both to character draft and the structuring of actions into the configuration of a novel.

There can be little doubt that the relatively limited range of personality spread is an expression of the endoformality I have suggested as an aesthetic principle. At the same time, if within that close range we note the simultaneous existence of traits we would think inconsistent, we must give serious consideration to the probable cause. Let me illustrate these in turn, using Okonkwo from Things Fall Apart, and Danda, a pair of opposing personality types. Each of these characters acts within a limited range, and each is subject to the charge by European critics that they commit certain actions which would appear to be inconsistent with their over-all character development. The closeness of range in their developments communicates to us as a kind of caricature. Okonkwo is all bluster, strength, and aggression; Danda all charm, cowardice, and indecision. Neither is given the contrapuntal play-off of competing characteristics that makes fictional characters real to us. There is none of Danda in Okonkwo, none of Okonkwo in Danda. Neither is meaningfully touched by tenderness, affection, probity, selflessness. Both of them commit actions for which we do not seem to be prepared, actions which do not appear to derive from their characters as we understand them. Okonkwo, the indomitable, is dominated and suicides; Danda, the light-hearted charmer, with no prior evidence in his character, commits actions which are held by his elders and peers to be seriously reprehensible --seduction, theft, cowardice, and the failure to render filial loyalties. But still, throughout the novel, there is no probing to explain this curious pattern, no presentation of character complexity to account for it.

If the range of personality characteristics in the fictional characters is limited, it is also curious. The former is directly traceable, as we have seen, to the aesthetic. The cause for the latter must be sought elsewhere--and it lies in the very simple perception that personality characteristics do not everywhere constellate as we in Europe and America would have them. It is obvious that we cannot evaluate the delineation of a character nor the pattern of his action--what he does or what happens to him--until we are prepared to admit the variability of the clustering of personality traits, and until we face up to the fact that there is more than one theory of human action. It is the task of the thoughtful and serious critic to attempt to discern such variables where there is adequate reason to believe that they exist. Further, while it is fully possible that adequate motivation for actions exists, within the framework of an unknown theory, it is also possible that the infatuation with motivation is a western preoccupation. Perhaps we are concerned with the etiology of a problem, the Nigerians with its solution. Perhaps our devotion to "individualism" indisposes us to perceive their "familialism." Perhaps we seek knowledge, and they wisdom.

It will require research that has not yet been begun to discern what might be the nature of these theories of action. But I suggest that the following kind of consideration might well be relevant:

> Many delinquent children, both boys and girls, are regarded by their parents as "abiku" children, who have been born and have died many times. One boy of thirteen was said by his father to have been spoilt because he died nine times before he finally agreed to stay on earth. Such children will describe how their child companions in the world from which they come speak to them, urging them to run away or to steal. Some children make capital of this, insisting that feasts must be provided for their companions--in which they and their earthly friends take part, or they will be called back to heaven. Others threaten to leave home, and return to heaven, if they are not given new clothes when they ask for them. Others are, however, afraid of their companions. For example, one boy described that he was being worried by his companions; he left his clothes in the house, and then came back and found the companions had put them outside; he went to sleep in one place and woke up in find himself in another. In his dreams, they put chains around his neck and pull him around.[6]

This is not a theory, to be sure, but it is doubtless a helpful term in defining one.

Of further, direct relevance to aesthetics of the novel is the lack of individuation one notes in the presentation of characters, the failure fully to distinguish a given actor as an individual from the context of his village, clan, family, role functions. It is true, of course, that in a sense the individual is defined in such terms as these, but only through his radical self-assertion in the web they define. In the Nigerian novels, the web appears to be the most important factor, so that we have the structure of a character rather than his unique proclamation, his forceful insertion into the world created by the novelist.[7]

Submersion of the individual ego in structure would appear to result from the assertion of life force, a continuity principle that stresses generationality, from the dead through the unborn. It is thus associated with the symbolic significance of the carvings, for example, and this assertion in carvings is conveyed in the rhetoric of truncality. The lack of definition of character, which is a function of role inundation, may reasonably be viewed as the metaphoric way of executing the dictates of an endoformal aesthetic in literary terms. The exploitation of space and time in the novels is, in short, systemically derived from the same aesthetic that informs the execution of sculpture, music, and dance. The primary axis of literature is, like that of music, temporal. But unlike music it is not as purely temporal. Although music also has metaphorical "space" in its structures in simultaneity, literature has a more immediate concern with space, if not in the same sense as dance, which is forthrightly spatio-temporal, at least to a greater degree than music. Literature concerns four-dimensional beings in four-dimensional circumstances, and accordingly one would expect to find that the treatment of character--its delineation as opposed to its development--in Nigerian English language novels might bear some metaphoric relationship to the ways in which space is exploited in characterization, which it would be silly to maintain--but because both derive from a common set of unconsciously held aesthetic attitudes, so unconscious indeed that I can even now hear my Nigerian novelist friends crying out in outrage against what I am saying.

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[6] Allison, pp. 28-29.

[7] Gleason, pp. 73, 140-41.

The particular manifestations of the treatment of the body in sculpture are two: by truncal emphasis, but within that truncality by columns--the neck, trunk, legs, the columns of the back. This columnar execution is, within the limitations of truncal emphasis, essentially a temporal or durational metaphor. It appears to me that the lack of significant individuation in the fictional characters is also, in a metaphorical way, an evidence of truncality, of endoformality. This is not to say anything as absurd as that the novelists concentrate their depiction to the navel, neck, and head. Rather, it is to say that what is implied in truncality is the avoidance of personal distality, which in character presentation we may take to be the definition of the full reaches of possible personal behavior, the intrusion of the actor as individual, rather than as the focal point of various roles, into the reaches of interpersonal relationships, carefully and logically related to the core of his character. It is precisely the absence of this that one notes in the Nigerian handling of fictional characterization.

But fictional characters exist in time as well. Accordingly one would be reasonably directed not only to perceiving the reflection of the temporal dimension of endoformality, which we have defined as the continuous analysis of time, but also whether there exist evidences of the truncality of characterization as projected in time. Let us quickly dispose of this latter consideration simply by stating that there is not, by and large, significant or believable character expansion in the sense of mounting individuation in the time span of the novels.

In music the spatial metaphor is the simultaneous tonal extension of the individual instant of music, the tonal constellation of the most basic musical unit. We see truncality here in the limited range of exploitation of the total conceivable tonal spectrum. But further the time itself is conceived of as a temporal continuity, complexly and consummately analyzed by different voices asserting intricate and complementary rhythms. Nkem Nwankwo in Danda describes this phenomenon in this fashion, the music that

> takes a small drop of the day and inflates it into a tempestuous sea in which the men and women drowned, that snatches from time one small moment and gives it the vastness of eternity.[8]

While complex and insistent analysis is the characteristic metaphor for the expression of continuity in musical time it need not necessarily follow that narrative time will also be subject to analysis in terms of a high degree of contrapuntality in dramatic actions such as one finds in multi-plot novels often encountered in European and American literatures. What we must search for, rather, are evidences of whatever sort that would seem to give metaphoric expression, in ways appropriate to literature, to the aesthetic principle that time to be realized, to exist, must be finely exploited.

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[8] Nwankwo, p. 24.

Of the characteristics of the novels first to come to mind is the noteworthy absence, in general, of inner development in the characters, one of the chief causes, undoubtedly, for the European reader's complaint that the characters often lack adequate motivation for their actions. This would seem to suggest the view that dramatic time is best realized through activity rather than through introspection, which may be regarded as non-time. The absence of the multi-plot novel would tend to suggest a metaphoric equivalent of the tonal closeness-in-time of the music. Even Danda, which proceeds through the presentation of two characters, is concerned with but one dramatic situation--the dynamics of family continuity--and the dramatic time fulfillment is accomplished not so much with two "drums" therefore as with one pressure drum.

On the other hand, it is not possible, in terms of the aesthetic of endo-formality, to preclude the possibility of occurrence of novels of complex actionality. But we are concerned here not with speculation about what could happen but with accounting in reasonable terms for what does happen.

If the characters do not achieve greater individuation in time, they clearly move through time, and in so doing establish themselves, for the novels are not, by reason of their actionality, static. They become known to us, though on a smaller spectrum of personal identification than we are accustomed to expecting, and in terms of clusters of personality traits that do not, for various reasonable factors, hang together as we would want to have them do.

This being the case, and bearing in mind the uniqueness of function, form, content, and aesthetic, we are placed in the position of raising very serious questions about the role of the European critic vis-a-vis Nigerian fiction. It is evident that the non-Nigerian critic faces formidable epistemological problems, which he had best acknowledge or else resign himself to facing up to the inevitable necessity of criticizing the works for what they are not--European novels. Absolutistic criticism is thus clearly ruled out, and the need for studies that would establish the basis for reasonable and appropriate criticism becomes clear. Normative criticism is both inevitable and desirable.

We must be able to say that something is good and something else less good. But we must be positivists and discern criteria before we can be normativists and use them. As we noted earlier, this is the first time that there has been written in a major European language a literature which does not basically derive from the cultural traditions that are co-eval and consistent with the language itself. We can by diligent study overcome the incipient ethnocentrism to which we are too readily prone because of the factor of a common language, but will it be possible ever, to have final critical judgment of Nigerian literature made by Europeans? To attempt such an exercise, in any case, is the only choice we have if we are to avoid committing the ultimate aesthetic arrogance--and error--of measuring by our own standards and concepts.

To speak of full understanding and its relation to criticism is to speak of teaching as well, for comprehension and evaluation logically precede classroom discussion. I should like to consider briefly, therefore, the kinds of researches that are required before courses in African literature, or indeed any exotic literature, can become a meaningful part of any curriculum, at least any graduate curriculum. In this I omit consideration of the "Culture" courses, surveys intended simply to acquaint the student with the fact that literatures do exist outside Europe, America, and parts of Asia. In other words, my concern is with the student who is concerned to understand the variables connected with the nature and function of literature in human societies. Careful research must be done in the field of values. Presumably therefore programs of African studies would foster research in this area as a critical background against which the study of literature, and the other arts as well, must be studied. It is not to be left out of consideration, however, that the study of literature and the otherarts also furthers such researches. In the field of literature itself, however, it is urgent that careful analysis be given the novels themselves. Studies must be made of symbolism, clusterings of personality traits; time-space studies must be made, and exhaustive context- and contingency- analyses must be performed. The research program that lies ahead of us is in all probability more vast than can readily be comprehended by the most lively and imaginative scholar alive today.

National literatures exist. This, I presume, is the conclusion of my essay. Some literatures are more national than others, I suppose, would be a corollary. In any case, they are set upon their courses, and they have but two possibilities for development--to become more speciated or to become less so. This will be a function of international politics and the persistence of subtle cultural variables.

One final note may be added with specific respect to Nigeria, although by implication it has general significance as well.

What is intimately relevant to the whole problem of a Nigerian national literature, and yet something of an aside, must be stated here. This concerns writing, publishing, distribution, and market, which are four closely interrelated functions. A surprising number of publishing facilities exist, from the Onitsha shops we in this country would call "bedroom printers" to the offices of Mbari and The African Universities Press. They distribute through two mutually independent and quite different systems. The bookstore as we know it, and the traditional market. Publishers compete for very few available shillings, since the average per capita income is placed at not much more than £30 a year. Those who are barely literate purchase the novellas, or chapbooks, at the price of one, two, or three shillings. These chapbooks, constitute one literary system. It is they that are published from the small shops in Onitsha, and it is they that are primarily although not exclusively distributed through the traditional market system. Those titles published by Mbari, the AUP, and Franklin, on the other hand, appeal to the more thoroughly educated, they are sold through bookstores, and they are expensive, bearing much the same kind of retail price for such books in England. It is obvious, therefore, that these cannot enjoy any very extensive distribution.

What is perfectly clear is that the literary structure, in a comprehensive and societal sense, as it exists at the present time is not a particularly viable one. What is further clear is that a national literature may not enjoy maximal development and definition until its publishing resources are internally controlled. A considerable problem is to be discerned in the fact that publishers have too easily adopted those structures and systems that have worked in European and American publishing without having sufficiently explored the possibilities of matching the publishing house to the economy through the greater use of traditional, low-overhead systems of distribution. It is easily conceivable as well that the writers might with great justification and reward devote some of their attentions to forms amenable to inexpensive manufacture and distribution. Had these been existent conditions, it would have proven far simpler to characterize the Nigerian literature, in an immediately meaningful way.

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Discussion

Cobb: If Ekwensi's *Burning Grass* were subjected to Taine's criteria, wouldn't it still be an indifferent book?

Armstrong: I am interested in African judgments on novels and to get various principles of criticism.

Lienhardt: The attitude that "literature is literature" implies that there is only one standard for judging writing.

Alexandre: Was African reaction to Kamara's Laye's first two books based on the fact that they were not *literature engage*?

Rouget: Perhaps it was Kamara Laye's leftist leanings which caused criticism.

Snyder: The critics might have objected to his omission of colonial issues.

Armstrong: We are faced still with the issue of absolute standards of literary judgment versus relative ones. John Pepper Clark's "Agbor Dancer" is a very African poem in its rhythm, its sound repetitions, and its metaphor. A metaphor such as "down lineal veins to ancestral core," while it may be available for the Western reader, cannot have for him the same cultural effect as it would have on an African.

Figuerca: I agree with your emphasis on metaphor. However I object to the stress on the culture-bound problem. I suggest that one study the development of metaphor and its uses within one culture. And I do not feel that students of African literature need avoid the question of judging a work as good or bad literature.

Armstrong: Everyone is culture-bound to some extent but anthropology and related disciplines offer routes around this blind spot. I really do not think that we can perceive metaphor rooted in other cultures and therefore we cannot judge it.

Figueroa: Themes such as the parting of the waters have universality, though, in the Jungian sense.

Armstrong: Yes, but Jung individuated the collective unconscious by culture.

Arnott: The use of characters to represent types is linked to the individualization/socialization question in African literature. Folktales, to Europeans, typically seem to lack careful characterizations, but there is really no need to depict either animal or human types whose characteristics are well-known to everyone in the culture. The same reasons for less than fully drawn characters must also be understood in the modern African novel.

Armstrong: In addition to the tradition of character types, the traditional involvement of individuals in the social structure and the lack of individual fragmentation which is found in Western culture both prevent Nigerian novelists from depicting individual characters. There is also this lack of individualization in Nigerian carvings.

Messinger: I assign my students an African novel to analyze after they have first steeped themselves in the relevant anthropological literature.

Armstrong: I would like to see African students do this also.

Jordan: The didacticism and lack of characterization are not so much characteristic of African literature as of the beginnings of any literature. In early Richardson and Fielding one finds these same elements.

Snyder: It would be interesting to investigate the lack of characterization in British African novels since French African literature from the Cameroons, for example, contains full characterizations.

Jordan: Many differences in writing are due to differences in individual talent.

Ramsaran: One must object to the lumping together of all African novelists. Peter Abraham's characterizations are quite different from those of authors from different areas.

Armstrong: My statements referred only to Nigerian authors.

Report: Work Group I

This work group proposes two research priorities in the field of African literature: the preparation of graded readers containing selected authentic, well-attested traditional material and published contemporary writing; and the preparation of a practical research model for a multi-disciplinary approach to African folklore.

The determining factor in the choice of materials for readers is their suitability for language learning and their value as linguistic data; the second consideration is the usefulness of the subject matter as an illustration of the social context of the language. There are two poles of available material for teaching and study. Bemba is a language with a corpus of useful texts but no adequate graded courses or descriptive material; the Akan languages are well documented, but there is no reader now available to students in the United States. Yoruba is an intermediate case, since both linguistic analyses and texts are available.

A multi-disciplinary seminar to study a corpus of traditional material should include an anthropologist, an ethnomusicologist, a linguist with competence in the appropriate language, a language specialist, a sociologist, a folklorist, a social psychologist, an historian, an economist, and a political scientist. (Additional needs may suggest inclusion of other personnel, such as local creative artists.) Since the corpus to be studied must be available to all participants for the period of preparatory work necessary for a two month summer seminar, an area such as Yoruba or Akan should be chosen on the basis of availability of existing research in various disciplines.

Malcolm Guthrie

Report:Work Group II

The work group centered its discussions on problems dealing with African oral and vernacular literature.

Two immediate problems taken up by the committee were the availability of published textual materials and the difficulty of finding publishers for texts. Existing published materials are scattered through a large variety of journals, in some cases journals unfamiliar to specialists in African literature. The pressing need is for good bibliographies of these materials. As for current publishing policies, there are no journals devoted specifically to publishing oral literature texts, and journals which do publish texts limit themselves to one or at most two an issue. In addition, most such journals desire that a commentary accompany the text in publication.

As partial solution to the first problem, the work group noted and welcomed the continuing bibliographical work represented by William Bascom's article "Folklore Research in Africa" in Journal of American Folklore, 77:12-31, and by the bibliographical chapter written by Bascom for Robert Lystad (ed.), The African World (New York: Praeger, 1965). Another bibliography in the field is Janheinz Jahn, A Bibliography of Neo-African Literature from Africa, America, and the Caribbean (New York: Praeger, 1965).

Consideration was given to the idea of a journal of African literature or African oral literature, but on the whole it was felt that this was not practical at the moment. It was felt, however, that it would be worthwhile to publish a series of occasional papers devoted to oral and vernacular literature. The papers would not appear on any definite schedule and could contain both basic textual materials and commentaries on such materials.

During the discussions it was suggested that persons without linguistic expertise tended to refrain from publishing texts they had collected because they felt their work might not be linguistically acceptable. From the point of view of extending knowledge, the work group felt that as much material as possible was desired; on the other hand, it was equally important that one could be certain such texts were sound. No solution was reached, but some compromise between the opposing demands was felt to be needed.

The work group made a strong plea for all texts of oral literature to be accompanied by recordings. The recordings should either be published along with the texts or should be deposited in archives from which copies can be obtained. It is now relatively inexpensive to publish record discs to accompany articles. The group also recommended the use of a videoscope to record tales whenever possible, because of the great importance of the social context in the actual telling of an African story.

In addition, the work group emphasized that the collection of oral and vernacular literature in particular African languages was essential to effective teaching of that language to students. An especial need is for graded readers at the lower levels in language training, where there is a lack of materials stated in simple enough language but with content sufficiently near the intellectual level of university students.

On more general questions of research needs, the work group made two specific recommendations. The recommendations are based on and take note of conclusions reached at the conference on African arts held at the University of Indiana in March, 1966. The first is that a joint research project, enlisting musicologists, scholars of literature, and researchers from other similar fields, should be undertaken for an area whose literature and ethnology are already well known. With this sort of background the researchers would be able to study the esthetics of the arts of the region and the relationships between the arts and the society. A pilot project of this sort is needed to serve as a guide for scholars in other regions as to types of research they can do and types of questions they can ask their sources. The second recommendation is that a manual of field techniques in the collections of oral literature be composed. It should be constructed with specifically African problems in mind and should include a checklist of procedures, an enumeration of the genres to be looked for, an equipment checklist, and a bibliography.

D. Arnott

Report: Work Group III

General Approach to Modern African Literature

1. The committee notes the rapidly increasing body of works of modern African literature which are available at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

2. Modern African literature can be studied for a number of purposes.
   a. For studies of a non-literary nature but for which literature can provide relevant information for the study of African culture
   b. For literature purposes to provide students with a presentation of African experience, and to encourage critical and aesthetic investigations.

3. Since African literatures come out of a wholly different cultural context, the normal approaches of literary criticism should be supplemented with relevant methods and concepts from anthropology and the other social sciences.

4. For the student who wishes to specialize in African literature, a considerable knowledge of the findings of scholars in non-literary fields is necessary. However, for the purposes of a survey course, there are works which are easily available to the general student.

5. Whatever cultural area is studied, an African literature program should include all materials irrespective of genre or language. The works of literature may be supplemented by selections from the oral traditions and from other art forms.

The Training of Scholars and Teachers

1. The Ph.D. program for someone wishing to teach African literature should be accomodated to the needs and requirements above as regards preparation in literary studies, sociology, anthropology, aesthetics, and psycho-or sociolinguistics. Ideally the doctoral program for the teacher of modern African literature should be multi-disciplinary.

2. The committee recognizes that departmental placement of such individuals is problematic, and the committee recommends miltiple appointments, depending on the framework of the university and the qualifications of the teacher.

The Strengthening of the Position of African Literature

1. Increased publication is essential. We need both outlets for scholarship and for articles of a more general nature.

2. The presence of an African writer in residence, made available to campuses on a short-term basis of one or two months, would be invaluable in stimulating interest. This could be done through an inter-university cooperative plan. In addition, the committee notes an un-tapped resource of graduates of African universities, studied in the field who could supplement the teaching of courses in American universities.

3. Increased participation by those bodies who have high scholastic standing, such as the Modern Language Association, The National Conference of Teachers of English, The African Studies Association, The American Association of Teachers of French, the A.E.T., and The American Comparative Literature Association should be encouraged.

4. The committee notes the paucity of materials available for teaching courses in modern African literature in this country, and suggests that member presses of the AAUP be apprised of the situation, and be encouraged on the one hand to secure rights to publication of materials published in other countries, and, on the other hand, to generate new materials.

Committee Recommendations

The committee wishes to encourage agencies and instrumentalities which have adequate funds to sponsor any or all of the following:

1. Members of this conference have found this meeting both practically and intellectually stimulating. We therefore recommend that further conferences be held to aid the rapid implementation of such programs as we have outlined.

2. The committee recommends a summer institute as the best way of introducing this new area to interested teachers, and this might well be done on the model of the summer institutes in African languages which now exist.

3. The committee recommends such financial support as may be necessary for universities to bring about such split appointments as we have recommended. This would be in keeping with the orientation of American universities towards the development of area programs based on the participation of various departments. The committee therefore further recommends that the burgeoning interests in African writing be supported organizationally and financially as have similar interests in other area programs.

4. Finally, we recommend the support of research projects relating to literary and aesthetic problems & the support of a writer or artist in residence programs.

R. P. Armstrong

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